

Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume One



All Glory to the Divine Master and the Supreme Lord
Sri Krsna Chaitanya

Bhakti Rakshak Divya Vani

Edited by Tridandi Swami Sripad B.A. Sagar
Assisted by Sriman Mahananda Prabhu

Dedication

This, the first volume of an intended series of publications of „Sermons“, is dedicated to the immense spirit of unrivalled dedication to Guru-seva excited in we disciples by Srila Guru Maharaja, the author of the worshipful, energetic conceptions contained herein

All Glories to Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga

Declaration of the Spiritual Succession of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat
Math



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Declaration of the Spiritual Succession of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

His Divine Grace

Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

Founder-Acarya of the Math

(Gaura-purnima, 26th March, 1986)

According to the desire of my Divine Master, I have been maintaining this disciplic succession but it is no longer possible for me, as I am now too old and invalid. You all know that from long ago I have chosen Sriman Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaja and I have given him sannyasa. All my Vaisnava Godbrothers are very affectionate towards him and it is also their desire to give him this position. I have previously given to him the charge of the Math and now I am giving him the full responsibility of giving Harinama, diksa, sannyasa, etc. as an Acarya of this Math on behalf of myself.

Those who have any regard for me should give this respect and position to Govinda Maharaj as my successor. As much as you have faith in my sincerity, then with all sincerity I believe that he has got the capacity of rendering service in this way. With this I transfer these beads and from now he will initiate on my behalf as Rtvik. The Rtvik system is already involved both here and also in the foreign land. The Rtvik is the representative. So if you want to take from me, and you take by his hands, then it will be as well and as good as taking from me.

In the Mahamandala, Sagar Maharaj and many others are also Rtvik of Swami Maharaj and also myself. They may do so, but in this Math and in any Math under this Math, he will be the representative. If anyone cannot accept this, he may leave the Math rather than stay here and disturb the peace of the Math. With all my sincerity and good feelings to Guru-Gauranga, to the Vaisnavas and the Acaryas,

Mahaprabhu, Panca Tattva, Radha Govinda and Their Parsadas, with all my sincere prayers to Them, henceforth he will represent me in this affair beginning from today's function.

Now I shall go from here and he will do the necessary. On my behalf, he will give Harinama, diksa, sannyasa, and everything.

Introduction

Here in Koladvipa, Navadvipa, we find a happy place where the Absolute is the most generous in His benevolence. When the Absolute is distributing Himself, He becomes Sri Caitanyadeva. And that Sri Caitanya-deva in the highest stage of His mercy is found here in Koladvipa.

kuliya-gramete asi' sri-krsna-caitanya

hena nahi, ya 're prabhu na karila dhanya

(C. Bha: Antya 3.541)

At Koladvipa - the Govardhana Hill of Vrndavana, concealed in Sri Navadvipa Dhama - the Most Generous Absolute expressed Himself in His maximum generosity. Without considering any crime, He

absolved whoever He found. He accepted them all. After sannyasa, when He returned to Bengal with the intention of going to Vrndavana, He showed His most generous and dignified temperament at that time.

He recruited the sinners of the world. Anyone who came to Him received the highest mercy. This is the speciality of this place. By 'place' we should not think of a mere geographical location. Of course, it has such a location, but really this is where the Most Generous Absolute gave Himself to the worst sinners. Here, even the most fallen souls receive the grace of the Lord.

Our highest necessity is distributed from here, Navadvipa Dhama; here is the key to the highest and sweetest mood within our heart. The key to enter into the conception of our sweetest home is given from here. Here is the key to that world of faith, sraddha, that world of love.

If I can know my real prospect in life, I shall find that the key to my sweetest home is here. I am wandering in the jungle of an unsafe position, where I may be devoured at any moment. My so-called ego, my conception of my own self, is not eternal; it may be attacked and destroyed at any time. But the key is here, for my real life and my real home. This has been given to us by the spiritual experts.

God the father, God the son, and God the consort - we can know Him in different ways, and such truths are revealed here in Navadvipa Dhama. In the conception

of God as father, we are what we are and He is supplying our food, home, and necessities in this plane. But if we truly approach Him, neglecting our wealth and achievements in this world to make a genuine heart's approach - not merely a formal approach - an exclusive approach - we shall discover what He is, as He is, and not as He is needed by us in our fallen stage. We are faulty.

Our feeling of necessity is also imperfect, and thus our prayer is faulty. But He came to give us what is best from the standpoint of His will, and that is distributed from here. "Take Me, accept Me, I am your most innate and intimate friend. You have no friend like Me. I am guardian, friend, and everything to you. Come to Me."

Chapter 1 Homeward Journey

Any experience about the Lord must come from upper to lower. It does not depend on us. We can only increase the intensity of our hankering, of our serving attitude (*sevonmukhata*), and whether He will descend to this plane or not depends on His whim. There is transcendental substance He moves according to His sweet will. He may come down or He may not, at His whim. He is free. We can only increase our earnestness for His presence. Although the potency and the potent are inseparably connected, we must generally know ourselves to be of the marginal potency.

He is everywhere - He is nowhere; everything is within Him - nothing is in Him. Such is His peculiar and mystic position (Bg. 9.4-6). Thus, our duty is to try to serve Him. We should not put much emphasis on 'feeling' Him either by mind, by body, or even by intelligence. He is everywhere, and He is nowhere: in a flash He may show, "Yes, I am here"; yet, when we are earnestly searching for Him, He may be nowhere to be found. His nature is independent. We can search, but we cannot say that we shall find Him.

He can only be served through His devotees... Real devotion is unconditional

Aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam, adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va: our duty is to devote ourselves cent-per-cent and most intensely for Him. We are only to serve Him. And service does not mean that we must necessarily come into direct contact with Him. Remote

service is also service; through His devotee it becomes tangible. We should try to

serve Him through His devotees, without expectation of any reward. We should have no desire except to serve, even without expecting to see Him once, to have His darsana. We shall only want to be utilized by Him. The little energy we have must be utilized for His cause. We are His potency, and we should prove that we belong to Him. Mahaprabhu says, "He may embrace me or reject me, or He may even be indifferent towards me. Whatever He likes, He may do, but I have no alternative but to serve Him." We must adopt such an exclusive and unconditional attitude. Not that, "If He doesn't want to reciprocate according to my will, I won't like to approach Him; so I shall join the atheists or the mayavadis. If You don't come forward to satisfy me, then I shall seek my own way - I don't want You!" If there is any tinge of such an attitude, we are far, far away.

Yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato, mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah. „We have no alternative but to serve You." To search means to serve: 'I want to be utilized for His cause. However petty the service may be, nothing is petty when in His connection, the least connection, even from far away. He need not please me, even by giving His darsana in a lightning way. Everything depends on His will."

Unconditional offering unto Him shows faith of the highest type. If our offering is conditional, we shall have to remain far from Him. The characteristic of the highest faith is absolutely unconditional: "I am only to be satisfied with just the chance to serve Him from afar, through some medium; or many mediums, not only one. *Dasa-dasa-dasanudasatvam* - servant of the servant of the servant of the servant .

. . I have His connection from afar, and my energy passes through the devotees, towards Him, towards the center of fulfillment. Whatever my position may be, I want my connection with the greatest fulfillment of the whole world!" Everyone is searching for such fulfillment of all their innermost necessities.

Sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja (Bg. 18.66): the search for Him eliminates all other duties. A true devotee thinks, "There is no obligation to anyone except one, and He is my Lord, Krsna." And His most laudable and greatest servitors are those who are in contact with His greatest agent. Not His direct contact, but contact with the greatest agent of His service will constitute the safer and higher relationship of *ananya-bhajana*, exclusive service eliminating all else.

Be fully purged of the enjoying spirit ...to be a member of the infinite world

No trace of exploitation should be traced in us. We should not run after any type of enjoyment including even the enjoyment of ,God-association.' We must be fully purged of the enjoying spirit. If a trace of enjoyment remains in us, we shall have to remain in one of the planes of this brahmanda, this universe, such as Bhur-, Bhuvar-, Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, and Satya-loka. And if any tinge of renunciation or retiring spirit is in us, we will not be allowed to enter into the world of infinity, Vaikuntha. Kuntha means 'limitation,' and Vaikuntha means the unlimited world. We want to be a member of the infinite world. 'Finite' only refers to the attempt of our separate interest to measure the infinite, and thereby, we conceive of finite.

When our ego wants to measure a portion of the infinite, considering, "This is my kingdom, that is my friend's kingdom, etc.," then whatever we see with our separate interest is maya - misconception and misunderstanding in the infinite. All such things must be dissolved. And the attitude of retirement, "If I can't enjoy, I shall stop work; I shall go on strike" - that type of reactionary mentality must also be abandoned.

All points, everywhere, are active to satisfy the center

Then, we shall be face to face with the positive side only. What is the positive side? It is the wave from the center, lila, the play of the Absolute. That wave is fulfilling the desire of the Supreme Lord, and we will be face to face with that. If the tendency for separate interest or reactionary retirement remains in us, we cannot have a touch of that eternal flow to satisfy the Absolute. When we are free from these two kinds of whims, we can come into connection with the eternal flow where all points, everywhere, are active to satisfy the center. Such a plane is not dry; it is happy, constructive, and nourishing, and that, we shall be able to feel. Only a small touch of it will make us understand that we do not want a particle of anything else. This is our homeward journey, and any other want or demand will keep us in a foreign country filled with death, disease, infirmity, rebirth - all these troubles. These troubles all occur because of misconception and identification of the soul with mortal things.

bhukti-mukti-sprha yavat

pisaci hrdis vartate

tavad bhakti-sukhasyatra

katham abhyudayo bhavet

(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 2.22)

"How can the joy of holy devotion appear in the heart as long as it is haunted by the ghosts of desire for exploitation and renunciation?"

These two ideas of renunciation and enjoyment are foreign to us. They possess us, like ghosts. They have taken possession of our ego and are playing with it. We are prey in their mischievous hands, and we must escape from such a conspiracy of maya. We must be free members of the infinite world where the noble flow of dedication flourishes. No limited aspiration exists there; a current of wholesale dedication flows towards the center and all concerned. And that is our home, the soil where we can live eternally. There, all are individuals, and there is no death, no birth, no infirmity and no disease. Our inner self will emerge and mingle with the residents of that land.

Real devotion is a very, very rare achievement

Our own experience should not be easily relied upon, such as thinking, "This is God, this is my conception - I have a touch of God."

There was a Babaji who was thought by many to be a great devotee.

Whenever he took the name, he shed incessant tears. Liquid also oozed from his nose, and he was seen to be in some abnormal meditating position. On either side of him his attendants would be constantly cleansing his tears and face with napkins, as he madly chanted the name. Some atheistic persons considered that he was displaying religious fanaticism, while common people who had some simple faith in God estimated him to be a very high-class devotee. But our Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhakti-siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakura Prabhupada, rejected him and his antics as devoid of proper God conception.

atha nihsattvah - nisarga-picchila-svante, tad abhyasa-pare 'pi ca sattvabhasam vinapi syuh, kvapy asru-pulakadayah

(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Daksina, 3.89)

"Whenever shedding tears, horripilation, etc., are seen in persons whose hearts are soft externally and hard internally, and who are habituated to crying, rapture, etc., even though they do not possess a semblance of divine emotion - such an imitative sentiment should be known as totally unsubstantial and lifeless."

Mental imitation of devotion is possible, even with-out a tinge of pure devotion. In a drama also we may find a man who is fully drunk playing the part of a devotee, shedding tears and dancing madly as if he is a great devotee. By practicing, one can acquire that mental condition of shedding tears, and one can show many feats as though he were a real devotee. Merely the display of some peculiar external characteristics does not prove the presence of pure devotion. Real devotion is su-durllabha - a very, very rare achievement.

When we feel we are bereft... that is a sober and healthy

When we can neglect the proposal of emancipation, we might think that we possess a speck of real devotion. In the face of devotion, emancipation is belittled as very lowly (moksa-laghuta-krt, Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 1.14). Yet, devotion is so rarely to be found, we may not expect that we have attained it (sudurllabha, ibid.). In one word, when we say that we have some devotion, we are not in devotion. Rather, when we can feel that we have nothing, although we have no aspiration for any other thing, at that point we may be making some progress. We do genuinely want something, although we can't clearly understand what; but we appreciate the devotees and the divine scriptures of devotion. When our appreci-ation is on that side, yet we feel we are bereft, that is a sober and healthy position. So vacant. We ought to remember that although we are negative, infinitesimal parts, we have come forward for a relationship with the Infinite, the Absolute. What price should we be prepared to pay for that? What form does that price take? We ought not to purchase such a thing very cheaply. To serve the devotees will be tangible, and to continue with the devotional practices and program that has been recommended by the scriptures and saints is most important. To go on - that in itself should be our reward. We are reading about Him, we are serving the saints and hearing their words. This is an engagement in itself. If we are thus satisfied, we have something that must not be underestimated.

"Every part of my being cries for the corresponding part of Him."

There is a great value in having the company of the saints and the scriptures,

without mixing with the robbery of this material world.

What is present here at this moment becomes nothing at the next. We are not of this world full of treachery. We are disgusted with the treacherous aspect of the world that charms us and engages us in a treacherous soil. Now something - next moment, nothing. We must give that up and try for something substantial: sat, cit, anandam - eternal existence, uncontaminated consciousness, and finally, the fulfillment of all our inner necessities - the corresponding engagement of the whole of our existence. *Prati anga lagi kande, prati anga mora*

- "Every part of my being cries for the corresponding part of Him."

(Jnana Dasa.) And Krsna says, "Only I can give you complete fulfillment, so come to Me and give up everything else":

Acting on the basis of faith... in the association of His exclusive devotees

sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja aham tvam sarva-papebhyo, moksayisyami ma sucah

(Bg. 18.66)

"I shall accept the reaction you have earned in the relativity of this mortal world - I shall clear your debt! You need only come to My feet." If we are charmed by this universal call of the Lord and we try to abide by it, then that is sufficient. If we are answering that absolute call to our best ability, Krsna assures us: "I shall free you of your burden; you simply come to Me. Give up all your duties." Faith in this call, and acting on the basis of such faith is a great thing in us. We should try to follow this according to our best capacity, and this is possible only in the company of the exclusive devotees of the Lord.

We shall relish being in the company of His devotees. We have found children of the same soil - we are meeting our home associates. If our internal satisfaction is of that type, we are holding something of a safe position. We want to recognize our home, but we are now traveling in a foreign land. We should try to find the inner feeling of our hearts, without wanting some miracle.

We are but tiny souls and many things may be miraculous to us. Yogis and mystic persons can show many miracles and captivate us. It is easy to capture a tiny soul by miracles. There are many powerful miracle-men in the world. Let

God save us from their hands! We must not allow ourselves to be the prey of so many miracles; may that charm leave us, once and for all.

yadi karibe krsna-nama sadhu-sanga kara

bhukti-mukti-siddhi-vancha dure parihara

(Prema-vivarta)

"If you are going to chant the holy name, keep the association of the pure devotee and totally abandon all your desires for enjoyment, liberation, yogic perfections or miracles.

May all these alternative prospects - exploitation, renunciation, miracles - retire forever. We want only the Lord of our heart, who can award the deepest satisfaction. All the atoms of our innermost constitution have their corresponding engagement with Him, and that too, is of the highest quality. This proposal is given by the Gaudiya Vaisnava school under the direction of Sri Caitanyadeva and Sri Nityananda Prabhu.

Try your fortune, however negligible it may be

In the Vrndavana proposal, the Infinite is in the nearest position with the finite: aprakṛta. Aprakṛta is where the Infinite has come nearest to the finite, as though one of them. When He is so close, so near, no one can easily recognize whether He is infinite or not. Mahāprabhu has suggested to us, "Try for the chance for your fortune in Vrndavana.

There is such a wonderful process: Nanda and Yasoda (Kṛṣṇa's father and mother) have captured the Absolute and He is crawling in their compound (*aham iha nandam vande yasyalinde param brahma*). Try to secure a position there, however negli-gible it may be. Try your fortune." So, we are in search of such a fortune where all other proposals are eliminated.

kam prati kathayitum ise

samprati ko va pratitim ayatu

go-pati-tanaya-kunje

gopa-vadhuti-vitam brahma

(Padyavali, 98)

"To whom can I tell it, and whoever will believe it, that the Supreme Absolute, Param Brahman, the Paramour of the damsels of Vraja, is enjoying in the groves on the banks of the Yamuna?"

It is inconceivable that the Brahman, the greatest, the Absolute, has come to search for the least love of the cowherd damsels of the Gopi class. He has approached in such a near and close way, and in such an ordinary, rural style. Try your fortune there. We are out to do just that, under the guidance of Sri Caitanyadeva, who is understood to be the combination of the positive and negative aspects of the Absolute. The positive is busy distributing Himself to others. Mahaprabhu is that infinitely and inconceivably generous aspect of the Supreme.

Exclusive preference for service to Sri Guru

We must not search for any sentiment in ourselves, divine or

otherwise. Once, one disciple was engaged in the service of his Guru, when a messenger from Vaikuntha came to fetch that disciple, saying, "The Lord is satisfied with your service to your Gurudeva and he is calling for you, so please come."

The disciple replied, "No, no, I have no time to attend to your call of Vaikuntha; I am very busy in the service of my Gurudeva."

This should be our attitude. "I have my engagement under the guidance of the Vaisnavas here; I don't like to be disturbed from this position."

A safe and entirely wholesome position

sakhyaya te mama namo 'stu namo 'stu nityam

dasyaya te mama raso 'stu rave 'stu satyam

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, the greatest exponent of the faith of servitude to Srimati Radharani, Radha-dasyam, says, "I won't allow myself to become

fascinated by the proposal of the higher level service as a friend, sakhya. Rather, I shall tend always to do the lower service, dasya, the service of the servant. I shall not consider myself to be a high-class servitor and I shall always tend to go towards the lower class of service. But He may forcibly take me to a higher service - "No, you are no longer to serve there; now you must serve in this higher category."

"But I consider that I am not fit for that confidential service, my Lord.

You may engage the higher servitors in Your confidential group, while I may serve in the lower level."

The tendency of the servant will always be toward the -lower service

That sort of tendency is safe for us. We should always be tending towards the lower service; and it is His business to forcibly take us up to a higher group, should He wish: "No, you are qualified to render such service, and you should no longer remain in the lower group."

But the tendency of the servitor will always be toward the lower service - dasyaya te mama raso 'stu: "I would like to be engaged in service as a servant, not as a friend." That should be the normal tendency of a devotee. With such a mood, he is safe. Even in that world, he should have no ambition except to be the servant of the servant of the servant . . . Hearing of such things from the devotees and from the scriptures, we may think such a conception to be exaggeration; but it is the reality, and we should search out this pristine substance within us. This is a safe and wholesome position.

Chapter 2 The Direction to Your Wealth

Sri Caitanyadeva is both Radha and Krsna combined. He is Krsna in the mood of Radha, searching for Himself. He is both the positive and the negative aspects of the Absolute combined. The Sankara school and other impersonalists claim that when the positive and negative combine, the result is a kind of equilibrium. But according to the Vaisnava philosophy, the combination is dynamic. His nature becomes that of searching for Himself - searching for His own positive self, in the mood of the negative. In that search, He distributes Himself to others. The negative attracts the positive, and the positive is thus distributed to the public. This is the essence of Sri

Caitanyadeva. The intimate associates of the Lord have revealed such a conception, and we shall be able to conceive it according to the intensity and degree of our faith.

Instruments to measure the infinite

Faith is the only instrument for the finite to measure the infinite. To survey the infinite, all other methods are futile. Faith is the most spacious substance within us. It can cover a long, long distance. In the infinite, what faith can we have in faith? We fear blind faith. Yet, in the infinite, the impossible becomes possible. Everything is possible, but only faith has the possibility of connecting us with the infinite, while all other methods are useless.

When our experience deceives us, faith will save us

Sraddha, faith, can go a long distance. And we shall be able to feel and conceive that faith is not merely imaginary. It has its tangible position, a most efficient position within us. When we can disconnect from all phases of perceptual experience, we can live in faith alone.

When all the wealth of our experience deceives us and makes treachery with us, our faith will save us.

High prospects for one interred in a burial ground

The whole world of our experience will vanish one day, with the final wholesale dissolution (*janma mṛtyu jara vyadhi duhkha-dosanudarsanam*, Bg. 13.9), but faith will remain, faithfully attending us. That is the innate thing with our soul. And with the wholesale dissolution of our body, mind, and senses, the whole world of our experience will go where? No one knows. The sun, the moon, the ether, the air - everything will vanish in wholesale dissolution. Only faith will live, even at that stage. Faith is eternal substance within us, and we are told that with the favorable circumstances of faith we can go back to God, back to home. Back to home sweet home! Such highest prospect is given to us who are in this world of mortality, which is a burial ground and cremation ground. Here, everything is bound to be buried.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,

All that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,

Awaits alike the inevitable hour;

The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

-Gray's Elegy

This is the world of experience everything leads but to the grave. But faith is not treacherous. It will remain within, with the soul, and grant hope, Faith will prospect, and sustenance. And what kind of grant home sustenance? Home comfort. Back to God, comfort back to home. When there is the proposal of such an alternative, who would be such a fool to run after the experiences of this 'civilized' atomic world? Experience and science are all the jaws of death.

Faith is nothing vague.

Everything may vanish but faith stands forever

ya nisa sarva-bhutanam, tasyam jagarti samyami

yasyam jagrati bhutani, sa nisa pasyato muneh

(Bg. 2.69)

Some persons are awake in the world of experience. Their day is the world of experience and their night is the soul's world, God's world.

And another class of men are wakeful in the soul's world and are sleeping in this world of experience. This world is darkness to them, and they are quite awake in the world of faith. They find that the world of faith is a permanent world.

The soul, however tiny, has a substantial position in eternity; it is an eternal factor in that world of faith. There, we shall find: "Whatever I see is eternal. Nothing will be effaced at any time. I am a member of the world of reality, and through faith I can reach such a subtle plane that never dies or changes. There is such a subtle, higher plane, and my soul is a member of that plane. The soul is wakeful there and is asleep in this world of experience, having no connection with it. And the man of the world of experience with flesh and blood, he is wakeful here, whereas that real world - the soul world - is like dark night to him."

In our present condition it may seem almost non-existent, but such a plane is the substantial eternal reality. Its existence supersedes all. All may vanish, but faith stands forever. Faith is the particular potency of Srimati Radharani.

The halo of Srimati Radharani

sukha-rupa krsna kare sukha asvadana

bhakta-gane sukha cite 'hladini' - karana

(C.c. Madhya 8.158)

Ecstasy personified is Krsna Himself, and He feels, tastes and enjoys Himself; but only through faith is it possible to transmit and distribute that ecstasy and joy to others. Faith is the very nature of the hladini-sakti, the ecstasy potency, which is represented in full by Srimati Radharani. It can transmit total Krsna consciousness to the devotees outside. Faith is the halo of Srimati Radharani, by the light of which others may understand Krsna. When the negative combines with the positive, realization of Their function is distributed to all other negative parts. The central, 'mother' negative can expand and transmit such faith and joy. Sraddha, faith, is a special substance about which we must inquire. It is not merely abstract.

We are wakeful in this material world, but there are others who are completely awake in that plane of faith, while this world of matter, this tangible world of enjoyment and exploitation, is underground to them; it is far, far away from their conception. They are deeply engaged in the world of service, through sraddha, faith (*ye nisa sarva-bhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami*).

Devotees won't disturb His Sweet Will

To them, even to see Krsna is a type of enjoyment. They think, "No, we won't disturb His sweet will; when-ever He likes to, He may call for us, and then we shall have a chance to see Him - otherwise not." If for my personal satisfaction I desire to see Krsna, "O Krsna, come and stand before me so that I can see You and satisfy my eyes or inner hankering," this is a kind of imposition by our exploiting nature. A devotee does not want this. Actual devotees do not allow these thoughts to enter their minds, but they maintain the mood, "Whenever He wishes to, He will call for me, and then I shall have a chance to see Him."

The height of devotion found in the Goswamis Madhavendra Puri maintained his body by eating only what

automatically came to him without begging from others; otherwise, he would fast. One day Krsna Himself came and supplied some food and He asked, "Why, Puri, don't you go and beg for food? Why do you act in this way, sometimes fasting?" Hearing of this incident, we may think that Madhavendra Puri was greatly fortunate - Krsna Himself came and supplied food to him. But we find higher devotion in Srila Sanatana Goswami.

When Srimati Radharani came and supplied food-stuffs to Srila Rupa Goswami for cooking paramanna, milk-rice, Srila Sanatana Goswami was very disturbed at heart.

"What is this Rupa? Did you aspire after something for me?"

"Yes, I did, my lord, my Gurudeva. I thought that if I could obtain some milk and rice I would be able to prepare some paramanna which is very dear to you. Then I would invite you to take that prasada."

"Oh, you have done a great wrong! This is so tasteful, I have never found such tasteful things in this world. Therefore, it must have some extraordinary origin. Who gave you the necessary ingredients you wanted for this preparation?"

Srila Rupa Goswami replied, "A girl came and gave it to me in the name of her family guardians."

Srila Sanatana Goswami wanted to know who the girl was, but she was nowhere to be found in the nearby village. Sanatana Goswami could understand the Srimati Radharani Herself had come and supplied those ingredients.

"We are searching after Her in order to serve Her, and She came and served us? What is this? Just the opposite! My dear brother, what have you done? You wanted some- thing for me and that was supplied by Her? We want Her so that we may serve Her but She came and served us, and went away. This is a great misfortune." He was greatly dissatisfied and left that place with these thoughts.

Rupa Goswami could not take that prasadam. He thought, "I invited my Guru Srila Sanatana Goswami in order to serve and satisfy him, but quite the opposite result came. He has left dissatisfied." He ran after Sanatana Goswami to try and

satisfy him.

So, we see that Krsna Himself brought foodstuffs to Madhavendra Puri, and that may be considered a very great fortune; yet, in this instance with Srila Rupa and Srila Sanatana Goswami, a similar event occurred but was considered a grave misfortune. In the higher type of devotion there is never any desire that Krsna or His Associates will come to serve and supply us, or that He will show Himself to us. To impose our whim on Him is not actual service. Whatever He likes to do He may do. And whatever may be necessary from us, we shall consider ourselves fortunate if we are given the chance to supply it.

Exhaustively eliminating all our desires in the extreme, we are to place ourselves fully at the disposal of the command of the Supreme Lord, who is never to carry out any order or wish of ours.

The faith of the higher devotees

By nature, He is eager to supply everything to His devotees (*yoga-ksemam vahamy aham*; Bg. 9.22). But the higher devotees do not like that Krsna will supply them with anything, or that He will render service to them. Such is the purity of their devotion. Through their faith, they think, "He is my Lord. I don't want to have His darsana merely to satisfy my lower faculty of perceiving that 'He exists.'" To consider, "If I can see Him, I shall be satisfied that He exists," is a very low standard of faith. We have no capacity to see Him. To make Him our object, keeping ourselves the subject, is a low standard of faith. But higher, intense faith fully proves that He is; that wonderful cause of everything - He is present.

Give up everything; try only to have faith

A certain section claims, like the philosopher Carvaka, that, No, no, there is no God or higher substance. Whatever we see on the surface is everything." But deeper faith says that the cause is He from whom everything emanates, He by whom everything is maintained, and He into whom everything finally enters:

yato va imani bhutani jayante, yena jatani,

yat prayanty abhisamvisanti, tad vijijnasasva,

tad eva brahma

(Taittiriya Upanisad, 3.1.1)

Merely the effect is not everything, but the cause has its existence.

And what is the nature of the cause? Some identify Him as Brahman, some as Paramatman, and some as Bhagavan. God is the destiner and designer of everything - He has created everything, and He is controlling everything. Everything is automatically exist-ing with Him, as a particular potency of His.

Give up everything; try only to have faith, and everything will be found. Everything is there (*sakala chadiya bhai, sraddhadevira guna gai*). Do not demand for any proof, because that is meanness. To search after proof as to whether He 'is' or 'is not' is meanness. With deep faith, automatically it is known, "Yes, He is."

yo mam pasyati sarvatra, sarvan ca mayi pasyati

tasyaham na pranasyami, sa ca me na pranasyati

(Bg. 6.30)

"For one who sees Me in everything and everything in Me, I do not remain unseen and he also is not unnoticed by Me: he never sways in his thought of Me."

Everything is in Him, and He is also everywhere. This is the characteristic of He for whom we are searching. Omkara, the monosyllable Om, is the seed of theism. Om means Yes. Always, wherever we cast our glance to search in one word the answer is yes. "Yes, what you are searching for, is. You are searching for happiness, pleasure, joy, fulfillment. You are in want, and in one word, - 'yes,' fulfillment is there."

Intimacy which even the Vedas could not give to the public

Om takes the form of Gayatri, then Veda and Vedanta Sutra; then it takes the shape of Srīmad-Bhagavatam and the lila, the divine pastimes, of the Lord. After they had the opportunity of participating in the Rasa-lila of Kṛṣṇa, the Sruti, the Upanisads, remarked, "Oh, we could not conceive this much. We could not inform the public about rasa, ecstasy, of such a high type. *Raso vai sah* - He is rasa, anandam, ecstasy. It plays in such a way? We could not understand so

much, and we could not give it out to the public. So, our Lord, we beg Your forgiveness. In the full play of your joyous pastimes, the magnitude of Your ecstatic nature is inconceivable. Please forgive us, we failed to reveal to the public that the highest joy is of such fulfillment in the extreme; so much so, that kama, lustiness, the most nasty thing in the mortal world, is found here to be the most beautiful, and of the highest type of charm. Even the union of men and women, which is normally to be hated and rejected - we find that this ecstatic joy includes even that. We could not understand, our Lord. Rather, the conception we presented is dry in comparison to this joyous life."

Faith in the devotees grants us the most substantial help

Thus, we should be careful to appreciate genuine faith. We should approach the devotees for faith. They are like many pillars of faith.

We are told that electricity can flow everywhere, but practically, we must be connected with the dynamo. Dynamos can show electrical power, and similarly, there are many devotees, past and present, in whom we can find real Godliness. They stand like pillars of faith, in their dealings and example. If we approach Christ, his ideal and sacrifice will encourage faith in us. If we examine the history of Prahlada, we will come to understand what a great devotee he is. Our hearts will become filled to the brim: "Here is faith - here is the presence of the Almighty."

When we pay heed to the devotees, with their help we are raised to a particularly high standard of faith. We are in a safe position when we turn our attention towards the devotees. They are like so many pillars standing and proving His presence. Summarily neglecting the enjoyable objects of this world, they stand with their heads erect, proving and declaring their experience of the Supreme Entity.

The devotees are above even sastra, the scriptures

Faith in the devotees, the Vaisnavas, grants us the most substantial help. Such a position is not flickering, but firm. One who has faith in the Vaisnavas achieves devotion of a tangible character. Otherwise, with only abstract faith in the Lord, without faith in the devotees, we are but beginners, in the stage of kanistha-adhikara. This is an unreliable platform. Our devotion reaches a reliable standard when we can find devotion in the devotees, and recognize their importance. The

devotees are above even sastra, the scriptures. The tangible stage when our real faith in them develops is the middle stage, madhyama-adhikara. In that stage, the opposition of the non-devotees may sometimes seem to partially hide the Lord in our consciousness, like an eclipse.

But these barriers within are dissolved when direct contact with the Supreme awakens. In the highest stage, uttama-adhikara, one can trace the Supreme Entity everywhere and in every movement (*yo mam pasyati sarvatra*, Bg. 6.30; *sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavam atmanah*, Bha: 11.2.45). It is His will, He is there, in His lila.

He may play hide and seek with His devotees. Sometimes He may be clearly visible to them, sometimes He may hide, and the devotees cry, "Oh, where are You, my Lord? I don't feel Your presence, I can't see You. How can I stand? How can I lead my life? Without You, I can't live. You are so charming and so joyous and the giver of so much fulfillment; I can't live without Your relationship." In this way, they begin to wail and cry.

When we find His personal beauty and charm, we realize that this is the cause of everything, the final objective

Everything is dependent upon Him alone. If we attempt to trace the cause of everything, we will find that the cause is something which in turn has its cause which also has its cause, and soon. But when we find His personal beauty and charm, we will realize, "Yes, this is the final objective that we and the whole world are searching for." There is a Bengali song - "O mountain, O Himalayas, O Alps, O Sumeru, what are you searching for, with your head erect? Have you seen the creator of this world and have you attained the fulfillment of your life. Have you seen Him. In this way, the devotee feels in his heart that everything is searching for the Lord who is the fulfillment of life itself. In the phenomenal world of birth and death, there is nothing tangible that should attract our attention. Our inner heart's search is for sat - the eternal, cit - consciousness that satisfies our perception, and anandam - the satisfaction of our hankering after beauty and love. When love awakens, the function of the brain retires. We will understand that love is the fulfillment of life. This is a special phase of our life.

Wherever we may be, we are automatically always searching, searching, searching ... searching for that 'Yes,' 'Om.' Om means, a big 'Yes.' What you are searching for - it is. What your inner heart is hankering after - that is existing.

Where the Infinite comes so close, the finite thinks He is one of us

Your search must progress from the apparent to the inner substance.

The Lord of your search is there. Thus, Omkara takes us to Gayatri, then the Veda, Vedanta, and Srimad-Bhagavatam, which describes the ecstatic, joyful side of the Lord. The Infinite comes so close to the finite that the finite thinks, "He is one of us." He plays the part of such a close friend that we think He is one of us. This is His highest grace and kindness upon us, and this is our highest attainment, which is found in Vrndavana. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught that we must abandon everything and make our only aim that Vrndavana Lord Sri Krsna: svayam Bhagavan, God of gods, Lord of lords. He is the

source of unlimited manifestations of supernatural power. Therefore, Mahaprabhu announced, "Search for Sri Krsna. You have no other duty in this world. Take His name, talk about Him, and whatever you do, go on in this way. Very swiftly, you will achieve the fulfillment of your life. Go on taking His name, go on searching for Him, go on talking about Him whether you are sleeping, eating, quarreling - whatever you are doing, combine it with Krsna."

But that search for Krsna should not be hypocritical. The sincere seeker will receive help and direction from the real devotees. With the help of the scriptures and the devotees, and with sincerity within you, go on searching after Krsna, everywhere. Whoever you meet, talk about Krsna, and don't talk of anything that is a prey to death. Wife, children, money everything will evaporate at the next moment, so don't think about them any longer. But in every step of your life, do everything only for the Eternal Joy. Krsna is not your concoction. He can be known through sadhu and sastra, not this mundane world of your enjoyment. Nor can you find Krsna in abhorrence - renunciation, but Krsna is with the sadhu, the pure saint; Krsna is the fulfillment of the positive inquiry of the heart.

Those who are carried away by the charm of the external world cannot understand their inner temperament; they are unfortunate (*na te viduh svargatim hi visnum, durasaya ye bahir artha-maninah*, Bha: 7.5.31). The main necessity is to keep company with the sadhu who has real faith in Krsna. Such a sadhu, is very, very rare in this world, but if you want to achieve the highest good, make that ideal the crown of your head - in any way possible, take the help of that association.

sadhu-sanga, sadhu-sanga - sarva-sastre kaya

lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya

(C.c. Madhya 22.54)

"A moment's association with the sadhu awards all success, and this is the verdict of all the scriptures."

kim pramattasya bahubhir, paroksair hayanair iha

varam muhurtam viditam, ghatate sreyase yatah

(Bha: 2.1.12)

"Imperceptibly, many, many years pass uselessly in the life of a person intoxicated by mundane pleasures. Better if only for a moment he realizes that he is losing valuable time, for he may thus become serious to attain his eternal benefit."

Here, Sukadeva Goswami says that one moment is sufficient to solve the whole problem of life, if it is properly utilized in sadhu-sanga. At all costs, try to utilize the opportunity of sadhu-sanga, the association of the agent of Krsna. What is the necessity of living for ages and ages if we are unconscious of our own interest? One moment properly utilized is sufficient to solve the whole problem of our life, for which we are eternally wandering about in this plane. We must be wakeful to our personal interest, not negligent.

With the help of a proper guide, search your own heart

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to direct us to our real interest within:

"You do not know your own heart. You are a foreigner to your own heart and its demand. There is a wealth within your heart - try to find it: eliminate the foreign things, and you will find your heart to be a temple of Krsna. With the help of a proper guide, search your own heart and you will find Krsna there. This is not a foreign thing to you.

Every heart is a temple of the Lord. It is your property, it is your home. Back to God, back to home."

Chapter 3 The Success of Faith

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written:

sakala chadiya bhai sraddhadevira guna gai

yanra krpa bhakti dite pare

"Giving up everything, let us sing in praise of Sraddha-devi - faith -

whose grace can take us to Krsna." Sraddha, faith, is the most subtle thing, and it is also the most tangible.

It is not imaginary. We must realize that it is reality, it is concrete, and not merely an abstract sentiment of mere individual consciousness.

Faith is universal as the most fundamental element that can connect us with the finest objective.

Power and grandeur are not proof of faith

Through electricity or radio we can establish communication over a long distance. The science is very subtle, and not known to anyone and everyone, yet, we cannot deny its existence; it has its tangible position. But faith is much more subtle, and through it one can establish both higher contact and reciprocation. Subtle faith is not approachable by anyone and everyone; it has its tangible existence and it may function in any circumstance if we have its peculiar contact.

We cannot give false statements that we possess it; our power and grandeur are not necessarily any proof of its presence in us. Despite great pomp and show, all we personify may be falsehood. We should be very cautious to maintain our contact with genuine faith.

The main qualification for faith

Of course, sincerity is the main requirement for faith's connection. No price, however valuable in this world, can purchase it. The qualification is laulyam - our sincere and earnest desire for the thing.

No one can purchase the Absolute, and no price can purchase Him.

The absolute necessity is our sincere desire and earnestness. With insincerity, we cannot make trade with Him; He is not so foolish as to become an object of trade for anybody! Sincere desire for Him is required, and that will awaken the conception to serve Him. We want Him, sincerely - through affection. We love Him, so we desire Him.

And to love means to sacrifice for the object of our love.

Srila Jiva Goswami Prabhu has given a beautiful definition of the word 'Bhagavan':

bhajanīya sarva-sad-guṇa-viśiṣṭa - "The Supreme Lord, Bhagavan is of such a nature that everyone who comes in contact with Him will want to serve Him and to sacrifice themselves for His satisfaction."

This is the result of faith in its developed form. He is so noble, we shall think that if we die to satisfy Him, our life's objective will be fulfilled. His noble quality is such that it draws so much sacrificing spirit for Him; it draws everything towards Him. "Die to live." Faith is such.

The agents of faith

We are in the ocean of faith, and the devotees are the essential agents.

Each helps the other. We are much relieved from the fatigue and trials of a long journey if we have a companion or the association of a group. Similarly, in this ocean, if we obtain the help of devotees of similar nature to ours, that will be most conducive. Even our Guru Maharaja, in a speech he delivered on Vyasa-puja, his Holy Appearance Day, addressed his disciples, "*Vipada uddharana bandhu-gana*: Oh my friends, who can give me relief from danger."

"To me, you are my deliverers from danger! In the ocean of faith, it is very difficult to journey onward alone, so you have come to help me in my dangerous, ambitious journey in the infinite. You have come, and you are engaging me in talking about only Him, and so, you have given me some engagement. Otherwise, to live and move alone in the infinite is very difficult, troublesome and dangerous. You have all come to hear something, and in this exchange of talks about Him the situation has been made very safe and easy to journey so far toward Vaikuntha."

Faith is the only capital - Faith in the real devotees brings us to a tangible thing

We must be conscious of our real position when we are searching for Kṛṣṇa. It is not easy, and also, it is very easy - both simultaneously.

Faith is the only capital by which we can make our journey towards the Infinite. Bhakti, devotion, has no beginning and no end (*ahaituky apratihata*). There is no beginning - it is there already. Before we came to know about it, it was there. It was there, it is there, it will be there. No one can resist it - that bhakti, that faith, is irresistible. It is part of the eternal substance. Its very nature is eternity - none can oppose it. We only have to make contact and associate with it, and the wave will carry us towards our goal. And if we can have the company of the devotees, the journey becomes very easy and pleasant, whereas to go alone is very difficult.

In the progress of our contact with faith, when we come to take benefit from devotees and have faith in them, we are more safe and our progress is also tangible - it comes to reality. From a vague, abstract position, faith becomes deeper within us. We can then recognize many others with the same objective in life, and the journey becomes easier.

It becomes conceivable. It comes into measurement. When we have faith in the real devotees, we can come into contact with such a tangible thing.

Thus, the position of the devotees is very important in our journey, especially in the middle stage. In the primary stage, not much importance is given to the devotees. With only a vague conception from the scriptures and with the help of previous accumulated merits (*sukṛti*), the journey is begun. But gradually, the beginners find that to journey onwards in the infinite is not an easy thing: "We thought that with a little progress we could attain the desired end, but now we find that it is not so." When we come to consider the real position of devotion, of what is God - He is universal, He is the ultimate goal - we may gradually become disappointed. But if along the way we take help from the devotees of similar objective, we shall feel much relief by their company, even though the destination may be far away. The difficulties of the journey are more prominent in the second stage. In the primary stage, we are not very exclusive in our objective, and so, we do not experience much difficulty. Real difficulties begin when we enter into the journey exclusively, with no other objective than to

engage our whole energy towards that high and elevated path. And if we actually achieve a touch of the highest stage, the maha-bhagavata stage, the journey again becomes easier. But the middle portion is difficult, and at that stage the devotees are very important to save us.

This is the period of both tangible acquisition and difficulty; our failings on the path to realization are to be rectified in this middle stage.

The association of devotees is of ultimate importance

When we enter into war, in the beginning we have much hope. We feel confident. But the real test is when the fighting begins. And when we finally conquer, we again become very satisfied. But the middle - when the war is being conducted - that is the difficult period. At that time, our co-workers, our comrades who fight along-side us, are very, very important to us. "I am not alone, but there are many others battling alongside me in that middle fighting period of war." Those companions are important. Some may disappear from the field but there will be others to encourage me.

Similarly, on this journey, we may see that many stalwarts are falling.

It may discourage us to see such respected persons -going away - falling in the middle path. Nonetheless, in the midst of those unfavorable circumstances there are others who are bravely making progress with unflinching faith, and they will help us. To stick it out to the end is difficult - but important and valuable. The test comes and shows how much faith we have. Nothing comes in vain, and we must take everything that happens in that way.

There may be so many stalwarts, like Bhishma and Drona, who fall flat in the battlefield, but still we must go on (*karmany evadhikaras te, ma phalesu kadacana*, Bg. 2.47). We are out to fight to the end. We must achieve our end of life, and we can imbibe such firmness from the character of the devotees. The sastra will also offer helpful advice, but the association of the devotees is nonetheless of ultimate importance.

How to persevere on this journey?

We need lasting faith, not flickering faith: "Oh, I attempted for some time but I did not find any tangible fruit from bhakti, so I left"; or, "To me, it seemed very, very vague. When I began, I thought this to be something tangible that I would

quickly attain, but it is not so. It is uncertain. I am giving so much energy for the cause, but still the desired result is not achieved." Previous tendencies also draw from the negative side, and so we find that many stalwarts are falling.

Still, we have to persevere in this journey, and we shall have to take courage from those who are standing and who are deeply engaged.

Though it is told hundreds of times that the Absolute is infinite, in the beginning we still tend to take it in the conception of the finite. We are accustomed to think of anything and everything in terms of finite. So, although we hear that it is infinite, it is Vaikuntha, it has no limit - we nonetheless cannot grasp the proper meaning. But when we make practical progress, many new conceptions must come to our knowledge.

Now, when our Guru Maharaja addressed his disciples as *vipada uddharana bandhu-gana*, "My dear friends who have come to deliver me from danger," we should, of course, recognize such a statement from both the relative and absolute standpoints. Students are a necessary part of a professor - when a professor has students, he feels the practical utility of his life has been successful. Thus, from the relative point of view, disciples can help the Acarya. But from the absolute stand-point, Krsna's will is everything, and the nitya-siddha or eternally perfect great souls who inwardly know the Lord's intentions cannot be disturbed by any danger in any respect, but outwardly such an appearance may be manifest in their dealings.

By mutual understanding and discussion, a nectar arises to nourish the devotees

mac-citta mad-gata-prana, bodhayantah parasparam

kathayantas ca mam nityam, tusyanti ca ramanti ca

(Bg. 10.9)

Mac-citta: "Their attention is in Me"; *mad-gata-prana*: "Their energy is also spent for my cause"; *bodha-yantah parasparam*: "They mutually assist one another." This reminds us of the 'Napoleonic chair.' Once, when stranded in a marsh, Napoleon arranged that each man sit on the lap of another, in a circular formation; each automatically protected the other from the otherwise fatal cold and they could all remain awake to pass the whole night of intolerable cold. Otherwise his army would have perished. So, by mutual help, one devotee is

asking questions, another is answering, and they are both getting engagement. The questioner is giving some energy and the answerer is also energizing. Bodhayantah parasparam: those of equal standing exchange their thoughts about Krsna - *kathayantas ca mam nityam* - and thereby their blissfulness is generated. By mutual understanding and discussion, a kind of nectar arises that nourishes the devotees. "One is asking something about Me and another is answering, and thereby that discussion creates a flow of nectar that nourishes both parties." *Tusyanti ca ramanti ca*: "Satisfaction is generated from that mutual understanding, and it develops up to *ramanti ca*, up to the quality of the absolute reciprocation, the 'wholesale transaction.' It rises up to that standard, *ramanti ca*, and again I give them a further installment, an illumination of new light (*dadami buddhi-yogam tam*), and they take a new course and are promoted into the 'suicide squad,' that squadron which is eligible for every type of service."

To be competent for any type of sacrifice or service

That particular type of 'soldier' is competent to fight on the land, in the water, in the sky or in any circumstances, and he is prepared for any form of fighting, any form of service. "I direct them to that section."

Yena mam upayanti te (Bg. 10.10). Unconditional service: they are ready for any service demanded of them. They are ready to sacrifice their lives for any form of service, and that peculiar group is in Vrndavana. I mentioned to Sripada A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja that in Gita, after *ramanti* (10.9) comes *buddhi-yoga and then upayanti* (10.10); according to me, the meaning is that *ramanti* or divine service in madhura-rasa progresses through *buddhi-yoga* or *yoga-maya*, up to *upayanti*, or the highest plane of service in Vrndavana. Sripada Swami Maharaja responded, "What more could it mean than this!"

Hence, *upayanti* means *kama-rupa*. In his *Bhakti--rasamrta-sindhu*, Srila Rupa Goswami has mentioned *sambandha-rupa* and *kama-rupa*, the two types of *Ragatmika-bhakti*, or devotion rendered by the Eternal Associates of the Lord, headed by the residents of Vraja. In *sambandha-rupa* the Lord's Associates cooperate according to their fixed relative positions of *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* or *madhura*, whereas in *kama-rupa* they come forward to serve any necessity that is demanded of them. They are ready to serve any and every desire of the Absolute.

They are like that group of soldiers who have been trained to do any service in the war without being limited to fighting only in a particular division such as the

army, navy or air force. They are prepared for all sorts of service, anywhere. Such is the kama-rupa group. This is upayanti te; they are awarded the instruction (*dadami buddhi-yogam tam*) by which they earn such capacity in the service of the Supreme.

Krsna is ready to cooperate with the servitors in any position. In Mathura, He gave even Sairindhri, Kubja, the chance to render higher service. Krsna is prepared for anything, and so the other side, His servi-tors, must also be prepared in that way. The high conception of kama-rupa is very, very abstruse. It is most difficult for ordinary mortals to comprehend.

tesam evanukampartham, aham ajnana-jam tamah

nasayamy atma-bhava-stho, jnana-dipena bhasvata

(Bg. 10.11)

"I am so indebted to those devotees that whenever they feel the pain of My separation, I cannot tolerate it. I immediately run to cooperate with them in accepting My service. Such is the intensity of the demand I feel from them."

Try to keep company with the successful candidates

In an examination hall, many of us may sit for the examination, yet many are unsuccessful and fall back. But we are not to dwell on them.

Rather, we shall try to keep company with the successful candidates.

They should be the focus of our attention, and with their help we shall progress. Progress means selection and elimination, and there is no end of making progress. We must take courage to that extent.

Everywhere and in whatever direction we may go, we shall find both successful and unsuccessful candi-dates. We shall try to avoid the unsuccessful. Some may be brilliant in the primary classes, but in progressing further, we find that they are proving dull and cannot pass the test. And there may be many who were not very successful in the primary classes but flourish in higher education. Thus, we should not be discouraged and disappointed on hearing that so many once respected stalwarts are falling away. We should try to feel the actual

soil. We need a sincere acquaintance with the soil on which we are moving. It is unintelligible to the fullest extent, but we must spare some energy to cultivate a deeper feeling for where we are, what we want, and where we are going. We must have a deeper feeling for the plane of our objective and achievement. We must not allow ourselves to be captured by the outer charm of things, but we should try to feel and trace the reality as our friend.

Liberation belittled

klesa-ghni subhada moksa-, laghuta-krt sudurllabha

sandrananda-visesatma, sri-krsnakarsini ca sa

(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva 1.17)

"Uttama-bhakti, the purest devotion, is the vanquisher of all sin and ignorance, and the bestower of all auspiciousness; liberation is belittled in the presence of such devotion, which is very rarely attained, the embodiment of the deepest ecstasy, and the attractor of Sri Krsna Himself."

Even if we achieve liberation from all the undesirable forces around us, pure devotion undermines this position of liberation (*moksa-laghuta-krt*). We may be a liberated soul, free from the reactions and apprehension of the future, but association with the positive engagement, bhakti, is much more difficult to attain (sudurllabha). To obtain a 'passport' is not the same as securing a 'visa.' One may have a passport, but in order to secure a visa it will have to be necessary to undergo more trouble. In other words, we may be released by the reactionary plane, yet we may not have entrance into the higher plane.

To have entrance there is far beyond this liberation. The qualification to eagerly aspire to give oneself wholly for the other plane of life is hardly to be found in anyone. Such a person has no motive to acquire anything for the plane in which he had previously been living for so long.

Furthermore, if he is appointed to be a preacher, an agent to do relief work here, he will execute that duty solely under the appointment of, and in the interest of, that higher plane, without any attachment that "I shall bring some good to the people." He will think, "I must put myself wholly at the disposal of the higher plane, and I shall not be eager to become an acarya, a spiritual master. Otherwise, there is the danger of committing namaparadha, offense against the

Lord's name."

Asraddadhane vimukhe 'py asrnavati, yas copadesa siva-

namaparadhah. It is an offense to give the holy name to the faithless.

It betrays the motivation to gain a 'position' in the higher sphere. This is a type of mundane attachment, a spiritual tradery, as is the habit of caste 'Goswamins' and other spurious lines. Rather, the healthy attitude should be, "If I am appointed from above, then I shall serve as appointed, and that too, only for the interest of those who have appointed me. I am entering that rank solely for the interest of that higher land." That should be the pure and perfect approach.

So, with a passport alone we cannot hope to enter easily into that higher plane which is *sudurllabha*, very rarely attained. But if we can enter, we shall feel *sandrananda visesatma*, "Yes, the very plane itself is most happy and full of independent spirit. I desired to secure a 'visa' to enter this country, and now I find that it really is as promised. I directly perceive that I am breathing in a far higher, sweeter atmosphere - a homely atmosphere that far excels anything of my previous soil." And finally, *sri-krsnakarsini ca sa*: Krsna Himself, Reality the Beautiful, who attracts the hearts of all - even He is attracted by the dedication of his surrendered servitor. Neither power nor knowledge have any play in this domain, but the Sweet Absolute is captured by the love of His devotee.

Chapter 4 The Honest Inquirer

We should note the difference between a servant and a trader. Many approach with some trading purpose, but the character of the real devotee should be that of a servant. Sri Prahlada Maharaja has mentioned that one who associates with the sadhus, wanting something in return for his personal interest, is making 'trade' with the sadhus. He thinks, "How much can I gain, and how much shall I have to give?" But a pure devotee should not have any such separate interest. Rather, he should try to merge within the interest of the Lord.

In whatever position he is, it does not matter - whether he is a brahmacari, a sannyasi, a grhastha, a vanaprastha or any other position - he must be willing to merge (*visate tad anantaram*).

He will not like to keep any separate account. His sole objective will be to enter

into the family of the Godhead. This is the very basis of pure devotion. *Tato mam tattvato jnatva, visate tad anantaram* (Bg. 18.55). We want to surrender, to be one of common interest with the Lord, and not to approach, ask some questions, pocket the answers, and then make trade with them elsewhere in any way. Once, when I was being asked many questions, I replied, "This is not an inquiry office. The inquisitive want to satisfy their idle curiosity; or, they want to be masters of many keys - that they will be able to give solutions to everyone's problems, and attain some status. They have many motives but they cannot understand the real necessity.

My sole inquiry is, 'How can I be utilized here?'

We require specific articles to execute worship, such as incense, flowers, lamp, etc. Similarly, if we wish to realize the supersubjective plane, there are three specific necessities: pranipata, pariprasna, and seva. Without these three ingredients, our search will be imitative, unsubstantial and farcical.

Pranipata means 'to fall flat near the feet of the worshipable': "I have come to the end of all enterprise with my previous plane of life; I could find nothing there to fulfill my life's objectives. Finally, after 'completing my errands,' I have come here." This is the practical symptom of pranipata.

Pariprasna means 'sincere inquiry.' Honest and sincere inquiry is allowed. The spirit of such inquiry is, "I want to know how I can be utilized in any way. All the charm for living elsewhere is over. My sole inquiry is 'How can I be utilized here?' "

And seva, service, is the all-important factor. "I have come to serve and to be utilized for the cause of the subject about which I have inquired. I have not come to take anything from here. I have come only to serve, with no other motive."

tad vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet

samit panih srotriyam brahma-nistham

(Mundaka Upanisad, 1.2.12)

Abhigacchet means *samyak-gacchet* - 'not with a return ticket.' Abhi-means *samyak*, 'fully.' I have completely lost my charm for the previous life; I have come to surrender to *srotriyam brahma-nistham*, one who can teach me, being

already in a position in the divinity and possessing both theoretical and practical knowledge about the objective. Without this process, everything will be futile.

tasmad gurum prapadyeta, jijnasuh sreyah uttamam

sabde pare ca nisnatam, brahmany upasamasrayam

(Bha: 11.3.21).

Tasmat means 'consequently' - because the candidate has lost all charm for the world of his previous experience - he has consequently approached with the sole objective of seeking an honorable place here for his future life. Prapadyeta means prapannam, 'surrender' he will exclusively devote himself for the cause. *Jijnasuh sreyah uttamam*: he has come in search of a higher life. "The lower lives are over; can I have an elevated life here?" He is therefore surrendering to one who is versed in both aspects of the truth - the reality (pare) as well as the literary description of that reality (*sabde*, or *sruti-sastre*), which is revealed truth extended from the higher quarter, beyond this world of sensual experience.

In the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Prahlada Maharaja refused to accept any boons offered to him by the Lord. He said, "One who accepts boons in return for his service to You is not Your servant but a merchant" (*na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik*, Bha: 7.10.4). Those who approach Guru and Krsna with their separate interest have come only to make trade. They have come to acquire something to satisfy their own purpose. We must be very cautious to avoid such traits within ourselves. For what have I come? There may be many motives.

Trading with Bhagavatam is a grave offense, aparadha

After a famous renowned Goswamin who was well-versed in Srimad-Bhagavatam had explained the Bhagavatam in a public gathering, Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaja, who was present during the lecture, later ordered his servant, "Purify this place with water and cow-dung!"

The servant was wonderstruck. "Why? It is already purified; the recitation of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Bhagavata-katha, took place here."

Srila Gaura Kisora Babaji said, "You heard Bhagavatam, but I heard only 'money, money, money.'" In other words, the Goswamin had been very eager to have Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji present at his lecture; the publicity that

Srila Babaji was present to hear his explanation of Srimad-Bhagavatam would give the lecturer greater scope to make more money in his trade. He came to read Srimad-Bhagavatam only for that purpose, and not to satisfy Bhagavatam or Krsna. He came for his own business; not for the purpose of Bhagavatam. Trading with Bhagavatam is an offense, aparadha, against the Bhagavatam, most detrimental to pure devotion. One's attitude in devotion is all-important. Srila Sridhara Swami, the renowned commentator of Srimad-Bhagavatam, has stated,

sa carpitaiva sati yadi kriyeta, na tu krta sati pascad arpyeta:

"Devotional services must be first offered to the Lord, then performed; not performed and offered afterwards."

We should be already committed when we come to serve, and not that we shall collect capital and later try to utilize it in the service of the Lord. The commitment is to Him, to Krsna. I have come to know about Him for Him, not for me or anyone else. Then, why is there a preaching department for others' benefit? That department exists only because of the instruction from above. Only if I receive an impression from that higher quarter, "Go and preach," shall I do so, and only then will my preaching be service, and never if it is done for the name and fame that "I am a good preacher doing good work, etc." I must have engagement from the higher office, and only on their behalf I shall preach; then it will be genuine preaching. Otherwise, it will be trading.

Na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik: Prahlada Maharaja has warned us against this trading mentality in the name of spiritual truth.

Devotion is a separate and distinct plane where we live only for the center; we aspire to live and move only as an agent of the center, never disconnected from the center - this is Krsna consciousness.

Reality is for itself, and we must strictly abide by this rule. He is for Himself, everything is for Him - and I am for Him. And whatever I do must also be for Him. We must strictly adhere to this conception, and always examine whether what we are doing is for Him or for any other part, however important we may think it to be.

The audacious reject the Vaisnava's guidance

And what is the guarantee? The guarantee is Vaisnava and sastra. One should not

be so audacious to think that he can conceive the whole thing; one should do everything with the approval of a Vaisnava (vaisnavera anugatya). In the beginning, when I joined Gaudiya Math, my Godbrother Professor Sanyal remarked one day, "If we read Bhagavatam on our own accord, we may perhaps acquire some knowledge, etc., but not bhakti, devotion. But if a Vaisnava orders us to read, our reading will be in devotion." Even reading of the scriptures is not devotion unless done on the order of the Vaisnava; independent reading is only knowledge-seeking. By following the Vaisnava, our bond with the Lord is guaranteed. *Sadhu-sange krsna-nama*: in the company of the devotees, chanting the name or whatever service we render is guaranteed to reach Him. And what is the guarantee of that? The reply will be, "His agent is saying so, and I am therefore engaged. I am not my master - I am his servant." Such consciousness must be genuine, as far as possible; success depends on this principle.

Reality is for itself. This truth, however hard it: may seem, must be accepted. 'Die to live,' and 'Reality is by itself and for itself - these sayings of Hegel can be very nicely employed by the Vaisnava school.

First surrender: then serve

aham hi sarva-yajnanam, bhokta ca prabhur eva ca (Bg. 9.24)

In Sri Gita, we find that 'Reality is by itself and for itself: I am the Lord and Enjoyer of all sacrifices.' Thus, Sri Sridhara Swamipada has remarked, "First surrender, then serve." Otherwise you will try to acquire something, pocket it, and fly away. No. Sign the contract for everything that is given to you, then do the needful service without relying on yourself.

Is such a life desirable? We have to think it out: there is so much risk - 'Die to live.' Must we first die in order to live in the future? Are we prepared to take such a risk? Are we sufficiently disgusted with the present environment that we can risk so much for some bright future?

"I shall jump!" Are we disgusted enough to take such a step?

If I am sincere to myself, and if I have a glimpse of the bright future, then only can I take such a risk. Otherwise no one would be so foolish to take such a risk and jump, giving up the present for the uncertain future. To feel the courage to jump, one must have caught a glimpse of even the tiniest ray of such a bright existence.

Sukrti, devotional merit, and sraddha, good faith, are required. If only a point of noble faith has arisen in one's heart, he may take such a bold step and he must jump; otherwise it is impossible. First sraddha, then sadhu-sanga and bhajana-kriya: with faith, when one has the association of the devotees, the practices of devotional service follow.

With faith, one can embrace the process of realization. *Sakala chadiya bhai, sraddhadevira guna gai:* give up everything and with your utmost energy praise the nobility of faith, the ray for a new and noble life.

Even great scholars and stalwarts of the religious world cannot comprehend the quality of the life of surrender to Kṛṣṇa (*na vai vidur rsayo napi devah*, Bha: 6.3.19); what, then, can common humans comprehend? Those remaining outside may be trying, but they have not yet come to the soil.

If we do everything for Him, everything will be very beautifully done

When prospecting for oil or minerals, one may see many outer symptoms indicating the presence of those elements within the earth below, but only after penetrating deeper can one confirm his find.

Despite many outer symptoms without substance, only when the search has reached to a certain stage can one know, "Yes, we have struck oil, or iron, or gold." So, Sri Caitanyadeva said, *eho haya, age kaha ara:* "The divine life you are searching for is; now go further."

In this way, with good faith, sraddha, one can thus progress. Faith must be of this nature: if we supply food to the stomach, naturally the whole body will be nourished; we shall not try to nourish a particular part by a local injection. If we supply water to the root, the whole tree will be fed. Similarly, by faith we can realize that if we do everything for Him, the center of Beauty Personified, everything will be very beautifully done. With all your might contribute your quota, however small, and from that point your efforts will be distributed beautifully.

And this is the highest harmony. The highest life for every part is of the nature of harmony with the whole.

If you have a good cook, why try to cook separately yourself; If you simply assist him according to his directions, your ingredients cooked by his hands will

be tasteful to all. So engage yourself with that principle. Whatever might you have, however small, place it at the disposal of the highest beauty, love divine, and it will be distributed; and you will also be inundated with the highest quality and degree of joy and fulfillment. Such a life of devotion has been recommended as the key to our life. Prahlada Maharaja, who is a *suddha-bhakta*, a pure devotee, of the primary stage, *santa-rasa*, has warned us of the contamination of the 'trading temperament'; it is a great danger in our approach to pure devotion (*na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik*). So we must scrutinise ourselves and abandon this trading temperament. At its root is *pratistha* - the quest for self-establishment, name and fame. Genuine devotion is devoid of such a temperament.

Chapter 5 Unconditional Service

Try to adjust yourself through sound only, the subtlemost element of this plane. Through sound, go on cultivating spiritual life; and that too must be approached with a serving attitude, otherwise it will be futile.

We are recommended to approach divinity through the most subtle element of this gross world. Although it is apparently nothing to us at present, this divinity is actually everything.

So, accept the subtlemost thing. But if the very life is absent, our search will be futile. Learn to give yourself, learn to 'die,' to embrace so-called death at every second. Even in this world we find the 'do-or-die' attitude in ambitious politicians, social workers, etc. In every duty and at every step they are ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause. If one embraces that do-or-die principle of life, he is sure to progress very intensely and become a great success.

Here also, when approaching the high spiritual life, you must invite death at every step. Give yourself with the most intense desire: do or die. At every point, keep your life as your guarantee: "I shall succeed or I shall die." Approach the sound, giving yourself with this spirit. No giving - no getting. If you can desire to give with such an intensified nature, you will be transformed into a bonafide candidate for the higher world.

Service means self-giving, self-dedication, and this should be our attitude to approach the plane. In that way, all the coatings of ego will vanish one by one, and the genuine self will come from within and select its own soil: "This is my home." So many coverings are deviating us in different directions, taking us far,

far away from our svarupa, our real noble self - a servant in the highest plane of the whole organism. The Beautiful is playing, dancing in His own sweetness and affection, and we can reach Him, following such a course of 'do or-die' at every moment.

Through self-giving I can acquire my fortune, and not as a master sitting in my chair gathering information from different quarters to utilize for my selfish plans. *Adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sanga 'tha bhajana-kriya* (Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, Purva, 4.15): to progress with faith, keeping the association of devotees and dedicating one's activities to the Lord, means this - you must go forward in your life with the spirit that you are willing to give away this life. 'Do-or-die' is, of course, not in the physical sense but the internal sense (bhajana-kriya). This is self-giving, ego-giving.

Mean desires won't be able to touch you

Tato 'nārtha-nivṛtṭih syat: if you can adopt this, the undesirable things within you will disappear very easily and swiftly. *Tato nistha:* then you will find a continuous connection with such a principle in your life. That principle will always act continuously, and other fleeting, mean desires won't be able to approach or touch you. Next, you will find ruci, a real taste for divinity. Otherwise, before that continuous stage, whatever taste we may think we have is only treachery and not real taste. Nistha means nairantarya: when we are established in twenty-four hours a day continuous connection with that charming substance, a real taste will arise, and we can rely on that taste. Any taste that we may find in any other position is unreliable. Twenty-four hours a day connection with divinity eliminating all other charms of this world is necessary. Then, the ruci, the conscious taste that arises in us, is a reliable guide.

After that, asakti, natural affinity, arises, and then the symptoms of bhava, the 'bud' stage of the 'flower' of prema, divine love, makes its appearance. This is the way of our progress. But if there is any imitation, only offenses will be created. Those offenses will be recorded in that circle of the examiners of the upper quarter, and they will give a stamp of disqualification that we are criminal and unfit.

This will go against us and hamper our future progress. Thus, we must be very careful not to commit offense, aparadha. It is better to be a newcomer with a new introduction than to have a criminal record, for that will go against us. We must

be very, very careful in our quest for the highest objective of our eternal life. This caution has been especially given by our Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta

Saraswati Thakura, and he attracted us to the line of exclusive devotion.

The very life of the practice is all important - this is self-dedication

Sevonmukhe, serving attitude was foremost. Our Guru Maharaja did not allow us to read much, even of the lower types of scriptures dealing with general sadhana or practices, not to speak of the higher books. Rather, we were expected to actually follow those practices by hearing from the proper source and practicing accordingly whatever was instructed from there. Serving - learn to give yourself properly.

There are different methods of service: sravana, hearing; kirtana, chanting; smarana, remembering; vandana, praying, etc. Srila Rupa Goswami has mentioned sixty-four kinds of devotional practices, and it has also been further mentioned that there are one thousand types of devotional practices. But practices are not very important; the very life of the practice is all-important, for this is self-dedication. Thus we should be very particular to learn that dedication is work under a Vaisnava.

Try to get practical training, working under a proper agent; that will help you most to learn and practice true dedication. Guidance must come -from above. It may be very rare, but it is most valuable. We must selflessly surrender to whatever directive descends from above.

"I won't serve my whims or the whims of men of my level, but whatever comes from the plane above, I shall obey very eagerly." This is the key, and this is service.

Sevonmukhata, serving attitude, means what? One day, during the latter days of his presence in the world, our Guru Maharaja Srila Prabhupada said to a certain sannyasi who had led a full twenty years of life in the mission, "You did not see me - you could not see who I am. Like a zamindar you have kept some householder servitors under you, and from them you periodically give a donation to me. You have become like a broker, but you should be wholesale mine - my agent.

You are not doing that. You are dependent on those householders while maintaining some connection with me. This is not necessary.

You are not a member of this world. You are mine alone. Whatever I say, you should do. You should not sell yourself to anything or any proposal of this world. You are to be wholesale my servant." Thus, this necessary attitude is rarely to be found. We should surrender to whatever flows from the higher plane and thereby substantiate its reality.

viracaya mayi dandam dinabandho dayam va

gatih iha na bhavattah kacid anya mamasti

nipatatu sata-kotir nirbharam va navambhas

tad api kila payodah stuyate catakena

The bird known as Cataka always looks above for rainwater, but it will never take any water from the ground even if there is an abundance there. He waits only for whatever water will come from above. Sufficient rain may come, or thunder may come, yet he will not take even a single drop from the earth. Our attitude should be like that.

We must follow whatever instruction and direction comes from above, and never try to fulfill any plan from the mundane world. "The Director, the Master, the Lord above - I am connected with Him." This sort of practice is conducive.

We may chant the name, hear the musical kirtana, etc., but the very life will be present only as much as our activity is on the order descending from the plane above, and as much as that order is earnestly being carried out by us. In that way, we may be taken above.

We may be promoted to the higher layer by preparing ourselves only to carry out the order from above, without question. If we are certain that the order is coming from the higher layer, we should surrender without question. By living at the disposal of the higher, we learn selfless service of the higher, which is not of any mundane source.

This is our necessity: Vaisnava-seva and Guru-seva - service to the Vaisnava and Guru. By Guru-bhakti alone - devotion to the service of Sri Gurudeva - in one

stroke, all desirable pursuits will be accomplished (*etat sarvam gurau bhaktya, puruso hy anjasa jayet*, Bha: 7.15.25). There are also many symptoms by which to recognise the genuine Guru, and by obeying the directions of the higher, we can make progress towards the higher; we may hope to be selected by the higher and be taken up to that layer if we are considered sufficiently qualified. This attitude will be the main tenure of our lives if we want to go to the high, super-conscious region.

If we apply reason, we shall be nowhere

In the Vedanta-sutra, it is mentioned that the process to reach that region is by revealed truth and not by reason (*tarka-pratisthanat*). If we apply reason, we shall be nowhere. Among expert arguers, there may always be one more expert - in this way, on and on, no end. Thus, tarka, reason and argument, is inconclusive (*apratistha*).

Intellectualism has no standing here, because super-consciousness is beyond our jurisdiction. It cannot be an object of our intellect. By serving, by honoring, by self-giving, by heart-giving, and never otherwise, can we invite that high guest. It is not possible to capture and encage Him by intrigue and conspiracy. Such an attempt will betray Satan in another color.

Not only self-abnegation, but self-surrender is necessary to approach God. Deep self-surrender will take us into connection with the higher, noble substance, and it must be cultivated by all means. And service is not service to maya. I must be very careful to perceive that I am not merely serving maya, who has appeared in a charming or 'godly' form.

In our present position we must be extremely cautious regarding who and what we are serving. The main wave will be jnane prayasam udapasya (Bha: 10.14.3): hatefully discard (uda-pa-asya) all proposals that your intellect may offer you. Whatever the intellect can judge and accept or reject must necessarily be of a lower type. So, you are to summarily reject that, and understand that you must bow down your head (*namanta eva*).

Try to connect with that section where you can never be master

The beginning of your interest is to bow down your head, and your heart will be captured automatically. Try to connect with that section where you will always be with folded palms, and where you can never be master. Such abnegation and

courage of self-giving is necessary if you want to live in the higher plane. Otherwise, you may reign in hell.

According to Satan's word, "it is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." But just the opposite is necessary.

Even tears and crying have no value if the inner tendency of self-giving is absent. Seva, service, mean self-giving, and that is the standard principle in the life of a devotee. This self-giving must really be to the higher sphere and not just haphazardly around us, for that is another way to be captured by hateful things.

Jnana, knowledge, is generally regarded as being very pure. By the majority of people, jnana is considered to be very innocent because it has no relationship with gross, material things. It is always admitted that to handle the gross material energy is very unwholesome (*sasvad abhadram*); and knowledge is considered by the higher personalities to be very pure, very innocent and spotless (*jnanam alam niranjanam*). But if it is not connected with Krsna, such knowledge must be hatefully rejected.

naiskarmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjitam

na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam

(Bha 1.5.12)

Here, in the Srimad-Bhagavatam, it is said that knowledge is widely considered to be spotless, pure and innocent, but if it is not connected with the positive absolute good, then it is your enemy. A qualified candidate will consider things in this way. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti*: Surrender is so pure, that any connection with knowledge, which is considered to be very innocent and pure - even that must be hatefully rejected. Such a degree of surrender is necessary for the higher association of genuine devotion.

Both the charm of material acquisition, and the charm of the mastery of knowing everything, are to be rejected (*jnana-karmady-anavrtam*).

It is not possible for you to know anything about the infinite, either in magnitude or quality. The infinite is a flow of auto-cracy, so what can you know of it? Therefore, knowledge means more than storing so many relative or false incidents, and 'selling' that information to the world in order to fulfill some other

function such as personal name and fame. Hatefully give this up and engage in unqualified and unconditional service. That is noble, and that will take you up to the nobler region.

Thus, karma and jnana - handling matter and handling knowledge - both are discouraged. Knowledge won't be allowed to enter that 'market' where the absolute will and autocracy reign. No rule and regulation can work there. False gathering and false store have got no standing there.

Only surrender, and we will have that high relationship. Serving attitude is our friend. We are a unit of serving attitude, and service means to surrender to the higher. And the higher means the plane uncontaminated with material and intellectual acquisition. We must serve such a higher plane.

Chapter 6 The Highest Conception of Conduct

One day, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was chanting the Lord's names and wandering in the sky, at his sweet will. Suddenly he found that he was just near Yamalaya where Yama, the lord of death, holds court for judging the sinners of this world. He also found there Brahma, Narada, Siva, and others, discussing with Yamaraja the meaning of two slokas spoken by Sri Krsna in Bhagavad-gita (9.30,31); but they could not solve the problem of discerning the proper meaning of the slokas.

api cet suduracaro, bhajate mam ananya-bhak

sadhur eva sa mantavyah, samyag vyavasito hi sah

"Externally, a person may be seen to commit many sins, but if he is exclusively given to My devotion, he should be considered most pure - a saint. Whatever he does, he does cent-per-cent rightly."

ksipram bhavati dharmatma, sasvac chantim nigacchati

kaunteya pratijanihi, na me bhaktah pranasyati

"Very soon, he will become religious in his behavior, and he will be seen to acquire real peace in his life. O son of Kunti, confidently declare to the public that my devotee never meets ruination."

The exclusive devotee is transcendental to piety and sinfulness

But one who is engaged in the Lord's exclusive devotion, *ananya-bhajana*, has been defined by the Lord in His own words, *sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja*: "My exclusive devotee is he who gives up all phases of duties (*sarva-dharman*) and surrenders to My feet, accepting only his duty to Me." How, then, having already surpassed all phases of duties and surrendered to the Lord, can that exclusive devotee (*ananya-bhak*) further be seen to become a 'dutiful' or an externally 'pious man' (*ksipram bhavati dharmatma*)? This is an anomaly.

Yamaraja, Brahma, Narada, etc., discussed this point, but could not arrive at any solution. How can one become "righteous in the near future" when he has already abandoned all kinds of duties, either righteous or unrighteous, in order to exclusively surrender to the feet of the Supreme Lord? Finding no solution, they sent for Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura who, they noticed, was moving in the sky and taking the name of the Lord: "He is a pure devotee - and not an ordinary devotee - he has deep knowledge of the scriptures, so let him come and explain these verses of Bhagavad-gita."

And so, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was invited, and he went there.

He gave the meaning. *Api cet sudura-caro, bhajate mam ananya-bhak* - despite his outer practices, the exclusive devotee (*ananya-bhak*) is to be accepted (*mantavyah*) as a cent-per-cent saint (*sadhu*).

Therefore, the conclusion is that he who can realize this, he who declares that an exclusive devotee of Krsna, regardless of his outer practices, is cent-per-cent saintly - he will soon become *dharmatma*, virtuous and religious. His statement and conclusion is cent-per-cent correct, and his conduct will soon become very pure and he, too, will have the chance of accepting the path towards eternal truth.

Whether or not we obey provincial laws, we must obey His Absolute law

"So Arjuna, you take advantage of this and boldly declare to the public that My devotee who gives himself wholly unto Me can never come to ruination. Even if he may be seen to be outwardly doing something wrong - he will be saved. His successful life is assured. By this declaration, you will get the benefit of becoming righteous and have the chance of attaining eternal spiritual peace.

Whoever can understand this and has the courage to declare that My exclusive devotee is never subject to ruination - he, in turn, gets his chance to come to this path of exclusive devotion, and he will attain eternal peace."

He will attain everything because he has the proper appreciation for exclusive devotion. Everything is for the Lord, and not for any other part. In the Absolute, everything is 'for itself.' 'The Absolute is for itself.' Whether we obey or disobey the laws of provincial or separate interest, we must without fail obey the rule that everything is for Him.

This is the main rule, and all others are subsidiary. We may or may not carry on our duties, but we must carry on our duty towards the center; this is the all-important factor in every case. Thus, one who can appreciate this and boldly assert it to the public must have substantial appreciation for this conception, and he is sure to survive and improve his future condition very soon. "He will attain the path of eternal peace, and that is the service of Myself, Krsna." This is the underlying meaning.

The highest quality in every part of the whole is that everyone must be dedicated towards the center, even crossing his dutifulness in respect to any other environmental position. And one who can feel, appreciate, and assert this - he will also soon achieve such a position.

His inner heart can appreciate, and that is something of a realization on that path; it will very soon take effect, and the public will see, "Oh, he is also entering this path of ananya-bhajana, the exclusive adherence to the call of the Absolute Center, and that is all-in-all."

Consider him free from fault

" *Dharma* means morals, duties, including duties to father, mother, country, society, humanity; etc. But if one neglects all these and keeps a straight relationship towards Me, he will be considered free of any fault. He is in the line of *sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja*. He is doing right, and one who can simply appreciate this will also very soon be converted to the same class." This is the whole purport.

In the standard or most general interpretation, the beginner in devotional service may have so many bad tendencies in his behavior, but when he matures these must disappear. Nonetheless, undesirable behavior may sometimes be seen to

persist, at least externally.

By chewing his poison, poison will come to me

The more we are particular about the conduct of others, the more we lose our own time and energy. Instead of benefiting us, such a practice is reactionary. If I try to find fault with anyone, especially a devotee, the fault will come back to me. By chewing the poison in his body, that poison will come to me. Avoid such association. Try to find the good in others - that will help you.

There was a system in our Math at the time of our Guru Maharaja: he ordered one devotee to praise another - especially one that the devotee disliked. Thus, the devotee would be forced to find the goodness in the other devotee who he didn't particularly like, and thereby be benefited.

Eliminating what was bad in his conception of the other person, he was to search for what good he could find, and thereby be benefited.

Dare not criticize those under charge of Krsna

There need be no culture with any bad thing, anywhere, especially in the devotees. Krsna has taken charge of His surrendered souls (ananya-bhak). Thus, whatever good or bad may be present in them is His responsibility. Any badness or evil in a devotee may disappear at any time by His will, otherwise Krsna may have that tendency continue in order to serve some purpose of His. We must have this vision. We must not dare to criticize those who are directly under the charge of Krsna, or we shall accrue great difficulty. We should try to find the good in them, for that will help us a great deal. This is not a theoretical matter, but a most practical consideration.

Srila Rupa Goswami has given the example that the sacred Ganges water may externally appear to be filthy, but that outward filthiness of mud, bubbles and foam cannot change the purifying capacity of the Ganges water; similarly, the devotee himself, the pure soul or atma, is the purifying agent - the purest and most normal factor in the world.

Whatever may be externally seen in his character is like the mud, bubbles and foam that is found in the Ganges water. The purifying capacity of the Ganges water is separate, and cannot be disturbed by any foam or dirt mixed with the water. The spiritual capacity does not depend in any way on the apparent

material capacity. A Vaisnava may sometimes be seen to be a little greedy, a little angry; or physically he may be blind or deaf or lame - but the saintly character of the Vaisnava is independent of the mental or physical characteristics.

During Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's tour of South India, there was the case of Vasudeva-vipra, at Kurmaksetra. He was a leper, but at the same time he was a great devotee. His physical behavior was also uniquely exemplary: if any worms fell from his open sores to the ground, he would pick them up and replace them in the sores so the worms would not die. He was a thorough devotee. Mahaprabhu embraced him, and by the touch of His embrace, the leprosy disappeared.

Also, Srila Sanatana Goswami contracted sores all over his body due to the contact of bad water in the jungle, when he was returning from Vrndavana to Puri. Mahaprabhu used to welcome him by embracing him, but Sanatana would try to withdraw. He objected, "Don't touch me! This is the body of a sinful man." The sores were oozing and emitting a bad odor, but Mahaprabhu embraced him forcibly.

Sanatana had decided, "I shall either leave this place or I shall invite death by falling under the wheel of the cart of Lord Jagannatha." But as the Lord in the heart of all, Mahaprabhu knew Sanatana's mind. He chastised him, and embraced him, forcibly. All the sores disappeared, and Sanatana's body immediately became like gold.

Exclusive devotion to Krsna is the only necessity

Mahaprabhu said, "Sanatana, you are a Vaisnava. Your body is not defective. *Aprakṛta- deha tomara 'prakṛta' kabhu naya*. Kṛṣṇa is testing Me. I am a sannyasi, and He is examining whether there is any partiality in My dealings with a Vaisnava simply because of his externally having so many sores. He is examining whether I will shrink from the association of such a Vaisnava and cast him aside. But your body is already pure, and only for the purpose of testing the public, Kṛṣṇa has created this; and if I cannot see this, I will have failed His test and will have been deceived by Kṛṣṇa. It is a mere show, it is nothing; your body is pure because you are a Vaisnava, a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. This impurity is only an appearance in order to serve Kṛṣṇa's divine purpose. Wherever there is Vaisnavata, true saintly devotedness, there can never be any contamination. Only to test my devotion has Kṛṣṇa sent you to Me in this condition." So Mahaprabhu

embraced him and demonstrated that he was absolutely pure.

Whether externally pure or impure, the whole principle is that our exclusive devotion for Krsna is the only necessity. In the ordinary sense, the Gopis are also sinners. They crossed the laws of society and the sastras, so they are 'sinners.' But they hold the highest position of purity by their exclusive devotedness to Krsna and no other. They cannot help but to serve Krsna cent-per-cent, even at the risk of crossing the entire code of morality. They are considered to be the highest devotional ideal.

But that sort of devotion is not so cheap that everyone will go on with their activities in this world, taking advantage of such ideals. That won't do. The real measure of devotion must be there, not that anyone may do anything passing in the name of pure devotion, like the prakṛta-sahajiyas. That can't be allowed.

Chapter 7 The Grand Victory of Love

Devotion is above all. Saranagati, surrender, is the highest property of everyone. Surrender to Him, and He may graciously make His name known to us, and we will be able to know Him.

In the Upanisads, it is said, *yam evaisa vṛnute tena labhyah*: whoever He chooses to make Himself known to can know Him. Otherwise, no one can know Him against His will. He has reserved all the right of not being exposed to the senses of anyone and everyone. He is so high, He can do that. If He does not wish to make Himself known, no one can know Him - whenever He wishes to make Himself known to someone, they can know Him. This is His position.

On the order of his Gurudeva Devarsi Narada, the scripture Srimad-Bhagavatam was given by Vedavyasa as the conclusion of his teachings. After giving the Vedas, Upanisads, Puranas, Mahabharata, Bhagavad-gita, etc., the last gift of Vedavyasa in the world of scriptures was Srimad-Bhagavatam. And the message of the Bhagavatam is that beauty is above all - not knowledge or justice.

Mercy is above justice. Affection, love, beauty, charm, harmony - these are above all, and this absolute conception of the ultimate reality is in the Krsna conception.

Hanker for neither power nor knowledge but hanker after the service of the

Beautiful

Beauty is above knowledge and power. Knowledge is above power, and above knowledge is beauty, charm, love. That is the supreme.

Srimad-Bhagavatam has declared, *krsnas tu bhagavan svayam*: the Krsna conception of Godhead is the most original conception of the Absolute. This is the prime declaration of the Bhagavatam: the Lord, as Beauty, is above all. And below Him is awe, reverence, power, etc.

And Mahaprabhu Sri Caitanyadeva pointed out, "Go to the beautiful - Reality the Beautiful - He is your highest attainment. Hanker neither for power nor knowledge, but hanker for service of the Beautiful, and thereby, you will be taken in and given entrance into the land of the Beautiful." This is the highest realization. Don't waste your energy by engaging yourself in any other pursuits, but go straight - *jnana-sunya-bhakti*. By the help of sadhu-sanga, take the name of the Lord and try to march straight onwards to the Krsna conception of Godhead. Krsna consciousness is our highest achievement, and this is given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recommended, "Don't waste your energy for anything else. Utilize your energy for the Krsna conception of Godhead."

So we try to make our progress in this line, and at the same time we also ask our friends to try to embrace this life. The fulfillment of life for every particle of existence of this world can be found here.

March towards universal good. Wherever and whoever you are, it does not matter. Take your course towards Krsna consciousness. This is the highest fulfillment of the life for everyone. You are only to turn your face towards Him and march, and the Sweet Absolute, Sri Krsna, will welcome you. This is the campaign of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

Srila Rupa Goswami described Krsna in a scientific way: *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*. Our hearts are hankering for satisfaction and happiness of different types but He is the emporium of all such rasas, flavors of ecstasy. All types of rasas are in Krsna and He is the personification of them all, so everyone can find his corresponding place in Him alone, and nowhere else. He is Krsna - *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*. All our necessary satisfaction is personified in Him. So only He can say, "Give up everything and come to Me, and you won't have to repent.

You will find your highest satisfaction." No one else has ever said such a thing in any place. Only Krsna has said this, and Mahaprabhu pointed it out. "Go directly that side and don't go any other way, but march straight for the Krsna conception - that is your home."

Chapter 8 The Brightest Sun

parivadatu jano yatha tathayam

nanu mukharo na vayam vicarayamah

hari-rasa-madira-madatimatta

bhuvi-viluthama-natama nirvisamah

"The gossipers may slander us, but we shall not heed them.

Completely intoxicated by drinking the wine of the ecstasy of Sri Hari's service, we shall dance and roll about on the ground, and faint."

There is a class that think they can take intoxication and chant and dance and roll about on the ground, imitating the divine intoxication mentioned in this verse written by Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. They think they can purchase 'divine' ecstasy very cheaply with the help of intoxication, but their whole attempt is deception. Not to mention them, even the yogic attempt is inferior.

yamadibhir yoga-pathaih, kama-lobha-hato muhuh

mukunda-sevaya yadvat, tathadhatma na samyati

(Bha: 1.6.35)

"The agitated mind, repeatedly taken captive by its enemy in the form of depravity rooted in lust and greed, is directly mastered by serving the Supreme Lord, Mukunda. It can never be likewise checked or paci-fied by practicing the eight-fold yogic discipline, which is generally based on sensual and mental repression (yama, niyama, etc.)."

Here, Sri Narada Muni is saying "You yogis think that by the process of controlling the breath you are getting peace of mind and also control over the

senses. But it is only for the time being. Even if it continues for lives together, it is an artificial thing. It cannot have any permanent contribution. You think that control of lust and anger is everything, and that you will find a sort of peace within yourself that you are master of lust, anger, and greed, etc. (kama, krodha, lobha, etc.). But you cannot retain that position. That is a lower position, a lower peace, and it cannot be maintained permanently. You will have to fall down. It is temporary (hato muhuh - controlled repeatedly). But *mukunda-sevaya yadvat . . . samyati*: the peace you attain from yoga practice cannot reach to the degree of peace you will find in yourself by serving Mukunda. This yoga is the artificial means of checking the kama, krodha, etc., that disturb the mind and bring quick reactions. By the practice of controlling the breath, the prana-vayu, one can become a 'master' of the senses, but it is temporary.

In the narrative of Ajamila, we also find mention of the atonement of the 'elephant's bath':

kvacin nivarttate 'bhadrat, kvacic carati tat punah

prayascittam atho 'partham, manye kunjara-saucavat

(Bha 6.1.10)

"Sometimes a person refrains from sin, but in time he again commits the same kind of sin. Therefore, I consider atonement (in the line of karma-kanda, or in the calculation of worldly deeds) to be as futile as an elephant's bath. (The elephant is habituated to immedi-ately rolling about in the dust after taking a dip in the river.)"

I have done something sinful, and if I follow that by an opposite practice as atonement (karma-prayas-citta), the sin is absolved. But the next moment I will compulsively commit that sin again. By jnana-prayascitta we may gain a somewhat more permanent abstention from the sinful activity.

tapasa brahmacaryena, samena ca damena ca

tyagena satya-saucabhyam, yamena niyamena va

deha-vag-buddhijam dhira, dharmajnah sraddhayanvitah

ksipanty agham mahad api, venu-gulmam ivanalah

(Bha: 6.1.13,14.)

"Austerity or one-pointed attention, exclusive celibacy, subjugation of the internal and external senses, charity, truthful speech, cleanliness, sensual discipline (yama) headed by nonviolence, mental regulation (niyama) headed by regular utterance or concentration on mantras - by the strength of such practices, faithful liberationists (jnani) who know the mysteries of religion drive away even the most grievous sins committed in thought, word, or deed, as bamboo clusters are destroyed by fire."

The landscape may be clear for a whole year, but next year with the coming of the rainy season, many shrubs will inevitably sprout again.

But the type of purity we shall attain when coming in connection with the service of Vasudeva, Sri Krsna, is of eternal factor and peculiarly purest nature. We cannot hope to attain this by any other method than our submission to, and acceptance of, the service of Lord Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful.

kecit kevalaya bhaktya, vasudeva-parayanah

agham dhunvanti kartsnyena, niharam iva bhaskarah

(Bha: 6.1.15)

"But most rarely, the devotee who is cent-per-cent absorbed in the service of Lord Vasudeva annihilates all sins at the root by his practice of exclusive devotion which is indifferent to the above mentioned practices of austerity, etc. As the sun completely destroys a mountain of snow, the exclusive devotees absorbed in the service of Vasudeva are also similarly able to totally uproot sin by the strength of their devotion, that is, even without exerting themselves."

Such peace can never be found anywhere else. Our proper understanding and adjustment with the highest center will give us such peace and freedom from anxiety of all types that cannot be achieved by any artificial methods which are devoid of understanding of the highest center.

tapasvino dana-para yasavino

manasvino mantra-vidah sumangalah

ksemam na vindanti vina yad-arpanam

tasmai subhadra-sravase namo namah

(Bha 2.4.17)

"I offer my repeated obeisances unto the Supreme Lord, who is all-famous as the Supreme Good. Without offering their actions unto Him, neither the liberationists (jnanis) who are dedicated to austerities, nor the charitable worldly workers (karmis), nor the world-famous, nor the performers of Asvamedha sacrifices, nor the sages or yogis, nor persons dedicated to chanting mantras, nor persons of virtuous behavior - none of them can attain any auspiciousness in life."

Here in his inaugurating speech before delivering Srimad- Bhagavatam, Sri Sukadeva Goswami says to the scholars, "I know that in this assembly there are many scholars, yogis, and tapasvis of different types, but I present my case before you all: tapasvino - there are many penance-making ascetics; dana-para - there are those who are famous for their big donations; yasa-svino - there may be many famous for their writings or their sacrifice; manasvino - there are many great thinkers; mantra-vidah - there are those who are well-versed in the application of the mystic words, and so on. But you must realize that none of them can be successful in life without surrendering to Krsna. Understanding with the highest central truth can give you your peaceful and harmonious life, and no partial attainment can compare with such an acquisition."

Concentration induced by drugs is artificial concentration. All contributions from the mundane cannot but be artificial and of lower nature. In other words, this is 'fossil- fatherism.' 'The fossil has created God.' From the fossil conception, God consciousness has 'come.' The fossil is supposed to evolve to the human species, and the God-conception grows in the human section. So fossil is the 'cause' to produce God-conception. Fossil is the 'father' of God. So, to think that mundane intoxication can give birth to the happy ecstasy of the conception of the absolute beauty and sweetness - this is atheism.

Although consciousness is subtle, it is more durable than these fossils of the mundane. We must not be afraid of transforming, or 'dying'; we should welcome the death of our ego. 'Die to live.' If our motivation comes from the proper source, we shall also know the troubles we face as not mere renunciation. We

must not accept only trouble, but we have to fulfill His purpose. The inner sacrifice is more necessary than the external sacrifice. So yukta-vairagya (abnegation in the spirit of devotion) has been recommended to be the most useful. Physical affliction is not our aim and object. Our object is to satisfy Him, and thus, whatever policy may be considered best for us will be recommended from there. We have to accept wholesale surrender to the higher agency. That is necessary. If we are allowed to consider our own case, we shall accept yukta-vairagya, because privation or affliction is not our end. Our end is to satisfy Krsna. The fire lit by our Guru Maharaja must be allowed to burn. We must not keep a feeble fire. The ideal that Gurudeva has given is very rarely found in this world. Out of thousands and millions of chances, we may have such a seed sown in our heart.

manusyanam sahasresu, kascid yatati siddhaye

yatatam api siddhanam, kascin mam vetti tattvatah

(Bg. 7.3)

"Out of countless souls, some have reached the human form of life, and among many thousands of human beings, some endeavor to attain direct perception of the individual soul and the Supersoul; and among many thousands of such aspirants who have attained to Seeing the soul and the Supersoul, only a few receive actual perception of Me, Syama-sundara."

brahmanda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva

guru-krsna-prasade paya bhakti-lata-bija

(C.c. Madhya 19.151)

"According to the thread of their karma, the living beings are wandering throughout many species of life in the universe. Among all such wandering souls, one for whom the fortune of spiritual merit (sukrti) has arisen by which devotion is facilitated, gains the seed of the creeper of devotion by the grace of Guru and Krsna; that seed is good faith (sraddha)."

It is not a light thing. We must know that this seed of Krsna consciousness is the most valuable thing in the whole of creation.

"Everything - good or bad - belongs to Krsna, and I am His unconditional servitor." Our general thought must be like this, and the details will develop gradually. We need not apprehend any injustice.

He is Absolute Good, so His mercy is absolute, His love is absolute; He is the loving center. We must make our heart broad, wide, to accept such a seed. Love is the widest thing. Love can accommodate even the enemy. Love is not afraid of any sacrifice, so it can accommodate even the enemy, and he is thereby conquered. Such conquering is complete and perfect. Our conquest is not perfect, but love's conquest is perfect. So we must be prepared to pay the value of this greatest achievement. 'Die to live.' What can I give? Everything belongs to Him, and I also belong to Him. I must admit that I am His.

This much is necessary. This is the central knowledge, and it is not unreasonable. I am not out of central control, and His all-controlling potency is not power, but love. This is the most liberal proposal, good news, and fortune.

Suspicion leads to suspension

Suspicion and hesitation are the worst enemies. We may be near to the truth, but because of our previous karma, our suspecting nature deceives us. In Sri Gita it is mentioned, sam-sayatma-vinasyati - the suspicious are doomed. Time is valuable, but it is passing in mere hesitation. If a general is sent to the battlefield and he harbors a suspicious mentality, what can he attain? Nothing. He will put all his soldiers into the jaw of the enemy general. But he should have a definite plan, and engage with proper intensity; to fight with maya - and maya is willing. The enemy is willing. One should feel his personal deficiency, and fight for the center. And supplies and fortifications must be had from the highest and most special

department - sadhu-sanga. Sadhu and sastra. With the help of the saints and the scriptures we must subdue the enemy within us and within our house. The worst part of the problem is that the enemy is not without but within. And we must get help from without - the most intimate friends of the Krsna world. They are our real friends. We are troubled by our enemies lust, anger, greed, etc., (kama, krodha, lobha, etc.), and doubt or suspicion is also our enemy. There is also insanity, illusion, and hatred (mada, moha, mat-sarya). Hesitation comes out of ignorance, or moha.

parinisthito 'pi nairgunye, uttamah-sloka-lilaya

grhita-ceta rajarse, akhyanam yad adhitavan

(Bha: 2 1 9)

Sri Sukadeva Goswami explained to Maharaja Pariksit and all the topmost assembled sages, "This illusory world is full of variety and movement, and above it is the Brahman, the non-differentiated plane of the Absolute. But on the other side, there is again a differentiated and specified world, the adhoksaja world (beyond sensual perception).

This Brahman is not the ultimate existence, but crossing Brahman, on the other side, there is an adhoksaja world. There, we find Krsna-lila, which is not a thing of this mundane world. You all know I have no charm for this world whatsoever. And my mind was attracted by the charm of that higher lila. Today I shall speak to you all about that lila (divine pastimes)."

The king and the sages had to give their undivided attention. "What does he say? This young boy, over sixteen years of age, does not even care to use any clothing. He goes naked. He feels no excitement, and he is constantly engaged in Brahman conception. And he says that there is another world on the other side of this Brahman! And Krsna-lila is the wealth of that side." They could not but give audience attentively. "And what does he say? How does he know? And what is the nature of that lila he speaks about?" They became more and more attentive to hear.

Sometimes musicians think that music will create disturbance in the stage of Brahman, but in the highest stage we are told there are musical instruments such as the flute, vina, and many others. There are expert musicians there, but they are already fully established in satisfying Krsna's senses, doing nothing for their own. Otherwise, music captures and attracts our minds towards this material plane. The element must be spiritual - all service. Krsna-lila springs up from the land of dedication, and the imitation is in the land of exploitation. And midway is Brahman, the land of cessation - sever everything.

Sevonmukhe hi jihvadau, svayam eva sphuraty adah: when the Lord's

transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes are spiritually served with all our faculties, He personally makes His gracious appearance within our spiritual

senses. We must be very attentive to the tests that face us in service. No deception can stand there.

ataeva kama-preme bahuta antara

kama - andhatamah, prema - nirmala bhaskara

(C.c. Adi 4.171)

"There is a gulf of difference between lust and love; lust is dense darkness, love is the brightest sun."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says,

kama-preme dekho bhai, laksanete bheda nai,

tabhu kama 'prema' nahi haya

"My brother, lust and love appear as one and the same; yet, lust is never love."

Karma-mamsamaya kama - lust is only concerned with flesh and blood, but *prema* is the *cid-ananda-dhama* - the abode of consciousness and blissfulness. There is no question of perceiving it through these mundane senses. Our ideal must be pure, and we must strive for it. We may be in a lower position but if the ideal is clearly before us, that will help us in our real improvement of life. A man who possesses the true ideal is a real 'capitalist' in gaining a better position.

jato-sraddho mat-kathasu, nirvinnah sarva-karmasu

veda-duhkhatmakan kaman, parityage 'py anisvarah

(Bha: 11.20.27)

"A person who has developed faith in narrations of My divine nature and pastimes may still for some time suffer the reactions to his worldly deeds (karma); although he perceives his addictions to worldly pleasures to be the essence of his misery, he is unable to abandon them."

He knows what is good, what is bad, but he can't help himself from falling into the clutches of the mundane senses. Still, he will repent.

bhumau-skhalita-padanam, bhumir evavalambanam

tvayi jataparadhanam, tvam eva saranam prabho

(Skanda-purana)

"For those who have stumbled and fallen upon the ground, that very ground is the only support by which they can arise once again. Likewise, for those who have offended You, O Lord, You alone are their only refuge."

In the beginning, when a child tries to walk, he falls down. But he gets up and tries again. In this way, we must proceed but we must not stoop to deceive ourselves. That is maya, deception. To deceive our own self and others is only to live in the world of deception. Such persons are deceiving themselves, and the environment also.

Those who can conquer their partiality and prejudices can stand amongst the most qualified. The eye to detect our disqualification is our real wealth. And we are given the eye to see by the grace of our Gurudeva. *Om ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya, caksur unmilitam yena, tasmai sri-gurave namah:* "I worship my Guru who has opened my eyes that were blinded with the darkness of ignorance, by adorning them with the collyrium of knowledge." Most important is the eye to see what is good, what is bad, and then to accept and reject. First the eye is necessary. Then there is justice, and above that there is mercy. Justice is the standard, but above that we can conceive that there is also a land of mercy, compassion, grace.

Increase the power of your position as a negative unit

With our faith and earnestness we can aspire after that mercy. If we increase the quality of our negativity, or the feeling that we are so mean, the positive will be automatically attracted. Try to increase the power of your position as a negative unit.

Trnad api sunicena (by feeling oneself lower than the grass), dainyam (humility), atmanivedana (surrender). Hanking in surrender is our wealth. We are the sakti, the potency, and potency refers to the negative unit of the positive, the Potent. Increase your negative side, your hanking. The positive will be automatically attracted to you.

In the impartial judgment, tatastha-vicara, we must find that the more humility, dainyam, we possess, the more devotion and intimacy we possess. Health depends on hunger. The more one feels hunger, the better his health may be; that is, real, natural hunger. It is something like this. And humility is to feel, 'I am the

lowest.' So in this comparison, the more one has realized the Infinite, the more he thinks, 'I am the lowest.'

How could I keep my life if Mahaprabhu did not come down to this plane?

yadi gaura na ha 'ta, tabe ki haita

kemane dharitam de

In the pastimes of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, one of the principal Gopis of Srimati Radharani, one of the asta-sakhis of Vrndavana, came here as Vasudeva Ghosh. In appreciation of Mahaprabhu's

descent here, he says, How could I keep up my life if Gauranga Mahaprabhu did not come down? If I did not come in touch with Gauranga Mahaprabhu, how could I live at all? That is so near to life, so near to vitality. It is the vitality of the vitality. If I had not come in touch with such a potent vitality, I should have been finished." In this way, our intimacy may accommodate Sriman Mahaprabhu. Vasudeva

Ghosh said, "I could not live at all if such nectar had not been extended into me. It would have been completely impossible to go on with my life."

Chapter 9 Faith in the Land of Sacrifice

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is putting the questions and Sri Ramananda Raya is answering: in this posing, the entirety of theological development was expressed there on the banks of the Godavari River.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is magnanimity and sweetness combined.

And that meeting on the banks of the Godavari was the only time Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu revealed His real identity. He revealed it to Sri Ramananda Raya in that place only, and we never find it anywhere else. *Rasa-raja, mahabhava - dui eka rupa*: Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is both Radha and Krsna combined. The most secret portion of the Truth was shown there, only once; and we never find that it was expressed in any other place.

A new grant never given to the world before

The whole cause of existence is twofold: the Predominated Part of Beauty and the Predominating Part of Beauty. This has been taught by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam. Not power or

force, but beauty and love is the Prime Cause. This is a new grant to the world, which was never given to the world before: the Prime Cause of the whole infinity is beauty and love. And this is the speciality of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

So we need not be afraid. Apprehension is a superficial thing - it is maya, illusion. In the depth of our life's achievement, there is no apprehension; all is love and beauty. Our future is guaranteed in a most optimistic way. In his Brhad-Bhagavatamrta, Srila Sanatana Goswami tries his best to take us through the path of gradual development in devotion. Prahlada Maharaja has been accepted as the basis, the beginning of pure devotion, suddha-bhakti, in peacefulness or santa-rasa. Hanuman is above that, in servitorship, or dasya-rasa.

Above that are the Pandavas in friendship or sakhya-rasa. And Uddhava is somewhat in friendship, connecting with parenthood, vatsalya-rasa, and consortherhood, madhura-rasa. In this way, adherence in devotion for Krsna automatically flows towards Vrndavana. The acme is in Vrndavana. This is also found in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's conversation with Sri Ramananda Raya.

Rsis are seers and feelers of spiritual current, not creators

Tebhyas tah pasu-pala-pankaja-drsas-tabhyo 'pi sa radhika (Sri Upadesamrta, 10): and the high devotion of Srimati Radharani is categorically different from that of all the Gopis. The type of service found in Her is practically unaccountable, inconceivable. *srutibhir vimrgyam* (Bha: 10.47.61): the Rsis, the Seers, saw that the Vedic mantras were eternal. They are not creators of the mantras in the Vedas, they are only seers and feelers of spiritual current; they are only observers.

The knowledge that is contained in the Sruti (Vedas) is not created by anyone or anything. It is eternal and flowing. The Rsis are onlookers and recorders. And that Sruti has come to reveal the Fundamental Truth underlying the whole creation; still, they are only inquisitive of something, they are inquiring about something. What that thing is, they do not know. They are only searching for the highest revelation that ever came down in the world. They are only searching for

that reality, but they have not yet come into its connection. And this is Krsna-bhakti and Vraja-bhakti - loving devotion for Krsna in

Vrndavana. And Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam came with the quality of that type of adherence to the Truth: unconditional surrender, adherence, searching, and serving attitude, seeking such fortune of serving the Truth. That higher type of truth and existence is such that if we can be only a seeker after it, we may consider ourselves to be possessors of the highest fortune. We can really post ourselves in the path leading to that Highest Truth.

The criterion for our self-surrender

That quality is the very basis and the degree of self-surrender (atma-nivedanam). What ever beautiful and valuable things we come across, we cannot but surrender ourselves to them. That is the criterion. If we come across anything higher within our vicinity, our appreciation means surrendering ourselves unto that. So according to the degree of our surrender, we have to measure what degree of quality of truth we have come across. That can be measured only according to the degree and intensity of surrender, or how much we could surrender to what we came into connection with, to the point of no return. And the true devotees know no satisfaction or fulfillment of feeling that "I have it. They feel no trace of such satisfaction that "I have achieved."

Never. The inner sweetness of the truth and its infinite characteristic is such. It attracts. It can attract to the highest degree and magnitude.

When some of the Brahmanas performing sacrifices wanted their wives to attend the yajna, some of the ladies were on their way to see Krsna at the time. One Brahmana came and forcibly opposed this. He stopped his wife, "No! I will not allow you to see Krsna." He stopped her body, but the life expired. The dead body remained there. She felt so much attraction to have a darsana, a divine glimpse, of Krsna. Immediately a lifeless body stood there, the life vanished.

A 'oneness' in which one's separate existence is maintained

Krsna is Beauty - Reality the Beautiful. Beauty absorbs us. The mayavadis, the impersonalists, say that the Brahman absorbs the individual soul so much that no trace of it remains. But this is an artificial conception of absorption. In the real conception of absorption, the existence of the seer of the truth is not done away with.

He remains, but he is absorbed with life. He is so absorbed and attracted that he becomes one. Even maintaining his separate existence, he is always one, full of Krsna consciousness to the highest degree, and this is visible to the world outside. The 'oneness' of the mayavadis is of course crossed in the beginning. *Brahma-bhutam prasannatma na socati na kanksati, samah sarvesu bhutesu*: "I am one with Brahman" - that stage is surpassed, and then - *mad bhaktim labhate param*, devotion is attained. There is oneness in divine attraction, union, and separation, in different lila or pastimes. To maintain the setting of lila, the lila is maintained. Here, complete absorption and oneness does not mean that everything is annihilated.

Lila is also eternal; the Lord's nama (name), rupa (form, beauty), guna (qualities), parikara (entourage), lila (pastimes) all are eternal. His relationship is a dynamic thing, not a static one. There is even union in separation. There is unity in every stage. The dynamic character of His pastimes requires unity, otherwise His Self-giving and the devotees' God-attainment would have been impossible.

When I entered Sri Gaudiya Math, I received Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's small Bengali book, *Saranagati*, for the very first time. It was so sweet to me that I purchased several copies and distributed them amongst my friends. Its price was only four paise. It is so sweet, it touched my heart. I thought, "Here is Krsna - Krsna-katha (talks of Krsna) is Krsna Himself. Here is talk about Krsna, the adhoksaja, the transcendental." I later composed a short commentary when I was in Nandagram, and it is published along with Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's commentary in Bengali.

I wrote an introductory poem to the commentary of *Saranagati*:

svairacarabdhī-sammāgnaṁ, jīvaṁ gaurāṅghrī-pankāje

uddhṛtya saraṇapattar, mahatmyam samabodhayat

"All the conditioned souls are sammāgnaṁ - they are diving or struggling in the ocean of svairacara or pleasure-seeking - anyabhilāsa - immoral or whimsical activities, energizing there. Gaurāṅghrī-pankāje uddhṛtya: taking them out of that ocean, you put them in the lotus - you took them to the lotus feet of Sri Gaurāṅga. You collected them from the wide, troubled ocean, and gave them to the lotus feet of Gaurāṅga. *Uddhṛtya saraṇa-pattar mahatmyam samabodhayat*:

and so, having placed them there, you began to instruct them about the great nobility of and high value of saranagati, exclusive surrender Samabodhayat: you tried to make them understand and realize the efficacy of saranagati roper. You, my Gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada did so, so I bow down unto you first." Then I also wrote a verse offering obeisances unto the writer of Saranagati, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Admission of saranagati. When our appreciation for saranagati comes, we will realize that we have come into the relativity of a great substance. Otherwise, one cannot find the necessity of saranagati at all. "Why saranagati? We want mastery over everything!" Modern science, the exploitationists, the karmis - they want everything under their control. But this is just the opposite, and opposite to the highest degree. In this, we shall find such a great and noble aspect of nature that we will voluntarily offer ourselves to be the eternal servant of it. "I am in the relativity of such a magnanimous, noble thing!"

Saranagati, herself, is reality. She contains Krsna within her boundary. Come to saranagati, and you will find Krsna. The halo of Krsna is saranagati. Through saranagati you can approach the Krsna conception, but not by inquiry.

Not by barren inquiry, but sincere and substantial inquiry - and that requires saranagati. Prani-pata, pariprasna, and seva. Pranipata: first you must give exclusive respect to Him. If you want to approach Him at all the first qualification is pranipata: you must surrender.

We are approaching a great thing, great in the infinite. And then, there is pariprasna, inquiry, to a certain extent. And then service - to be utilized by Him. To serve means to taste the juice. Only by serving can we connect, feel, and have any experience. This is just the opposite of enjoyment and indifference. Enjoyment, indifference - and service. And there is service as duty, and service as love - loving service. Thus, service is generally of two kinds. Service from the standpoint of duty is found in Vaikuntha. Of course, that also fetches something. But service in love, service actuated through love only, is most amply giving. That gives us amply. And there is also a gradation therein - santa, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya, madhura. This is reality. In this material world, in the world of 'enjoyment,' we also find the most intense enjoyment in lady-love, but this is the perverted reflection of reality. But there in the divine plane, in devotional service, divine consorhood is found in madhura-rasa. There also, in that section of devotees, there are gradations of servitors.

The Ramanuja Sampradaya (Divine Succession founded by Sri Ramanujacarya) divided into two, the Tenkalai and Vadakalai sections. Vadakalai refers to those who give more importance to the Vedic scriptures, and Tenkalai are those who give stress to the Tamil scriptures. They are known as Alvars, beginning from Sathakopar or Nammalwara. In the process of surrender, the Tamilian school lay stress on marjjara-nyaya, or the maxim of the cat. Marjjara means 'cat.'

In the cat's dealing with her kitten, the kitten does not do anything, whereas the mother catches the kitten's neck in her teeth and moves it here and there, wherever she likes. The kitten is passive, no attempt can be seen on its part. He simply accepts what-ever the mother does.

She feeds him, moves him, etc. This is marjjara-nyaya. The Vedic school, which was headed by Desikacaryya, favor the markata-nyaya, the maxim of the monkey. The cub catches hold of the mother's body, and then the mother wanders and moves the cub here and there. But the beauty of the cub is to clasp the mother's body. So the Vedic school says, "You have free will, O jiva soul - you have something to do. In saranagati, you have your part to play. It may be very small, but still you have some part to play. You are endowed with free will, so you must properly utilize your free will." And in the Tenkalai system they say, "No, we have nothing to do. We only need to think that we are His, and He will do whatever is necessary on our behalf." This is the difference between the two schools. The Vedic school holds that some action for free will is necessary. Your pure acceptance and consent is necessary, and the rest will be done by the Lord. But your consent or free will of acceptance, however meager it may be, must be present. This is pure consent. And the Tenkalai section hold that we have nothing to do.

Our consideration is nearer to this Vadakalai school, the Vedic school. The jiva has something to do in the way of cooperation or consent.

Otherwise, how can the jiva be a part of the Absolute? If the jiva has nothing to do, then everything is God's lila, spontaneous pastimes, and the jivas are all dolls of play in the hand of the Lord. No doubt, this may be so in the highest stage of realization. but that stage is yet to be attained. In the beginning, one has to acquire such a position. Because the jiva is part of the subjective world, he is naturally endowed with freedom. There can be no consciousness without freedom. Because he is an infinitesimal particle, his freedom is also very small, still, because he is spirit, he cannot but possess free will. In divine service that

freedom is maintained otherwise vilasa, freedom of movement in pastimes, cannot be maintained. In Goloka, everyone is mostly actuated by feeling, by Yogamaya (internal divine potency); they are actuated by love, but still they have their meager personal consideration, and that is influenced by the all-good and favorable environment of the divine plane. Otherwise, how would they maintain their particular name, pastime, and service? So individuality in the atomic energy is maintained all through. We do not deny the influence of the environment, but the environment cannot devour the personal character of existence of anything and everything.

Of exploitation and renunciation (bhukti and mukti), renunciation is more dangerous, because it holds a greater position than exploitation.

It can exploit more, just as half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood. It can misguide the devotees more. It has its own special glamour, over and above exploitation. It can capture the scholars. One who wants relief can think, "Oh, this is the conception of relief; there is no further." Renunciation captures those who may have been making real progress towards their good, and tells them, "Yes, you have come here, you have succeeded." It captures them in the name of the higher plane. Renunciation holds some prestige over exploitation; people think, "Oh, that must be the highest goal." So, in this way, half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood.

se du 'era madhye visayi tabu bhala

mayavadi-sanga nahi magi kona kala

(Saranagati, 27)

"The association of a materialist is preferable to that of a mayavadi."

If the mayavadi can make you enter into the cell of sayujya-mukti, the liberation of merging with the Ab-solute, you are finished. There is no calculable time when you will be able to emerge from it. But if you are in materialism, visaya, the recruiters may come to you. You may get the chance of meeting a preacher in this material world. But in sayujya-mukti you are nowhere. It is very difficult and rare to awaken you from the deepest possible sleep. So that is more dangerous, as half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood.

The mayavadi may even try to bring others into his impersonal conception,

because he is suffering from that disease. He thinks that impersonal liberation is the highest, so he recruits for his own purpose. *Ye nye 'ravindaksa vimukta-maninas tvayi astabhad vad avisud-dha-buddhayah* (Bha: 10.2.42). They do not perceive the mistake in their calculation, but they think they have attained the highest type of liberation, and so they try to recruit others for their purpose. But there is a mistake in their calculation. They are not aware of the fact. They are misguided and they also help to misguide others.

How can one who is not established in the truth guide others towards the truth? If it had been possible for him to know the truth, he would have gone toward the land of truth himself; but he has no knowledge of it. He has miscalculated.

Yam evaisa vrnute tena labhyah: but there is a conscious land, and whoever is accepted by that land can enter it. Otherwise, by dint of one's own power, no one can enter that land. This point has been missed by the mayavadis. That is an independent element; the soil is independent. Matter is not independent, and the soul is 'independent' here in the material world. But the conscious world is made of supersoul - the very soil is independent. If the minutely independent soul accepts that land, he can enter that land, otherwise not. There is such a land. So the question of becoming a slave must arise.

Accept slavery to its perfection

The highest qualification within us is our acceptance of the slave mentality for the Absolute. This is the only way to be earnest for the association of the highest existence. We must be ready to accept slavery to its perfection, and then we will be allowed to enter into that domain. Otherwise, we have no hope. It is not very easy to embrace slave mentality - eternal slavery. Slavery is also our future prospect.

Are you ready to think like this? You have to be so broadminded and hopeful that such a higher entity exists. Your hope and faith will have to be of such a magnanimous type to enter that land. You will sign the bond, the contract: "I am going to accept eternal slavery! I want to enter that land!" You have to search your fortune, and sign the bond of slavery: the association there is so high that even as a slave I want that association. I earnestly hanker for that sweet land where my meager personality can become a slave. Such intense faith is necessary, where all other experience, even knowledge, fails. Only faith can carry us there.

Become a slave there you will become a master

Sraddha - faith in devotion to Krsna is the unit with which the whole structure has been constructed there. All is faith. The land of faith.

There, faith holds autonomy. Everything moves through faith - no calculation, no robbing, no stealing, no cheating. This is automatic there in the land of faith. None of this nasty life. "I shall always be alert that I may not be cheated in the land of so many cheats; Here, I always have to be alert - I will be cheated, I will be cheated." That is a nasty life. So we must enter into a life where there is automatically no cheating, no calculation, and no reasoning. All are good - all are busy to give you something. Here, we are suffering from the opposite. But there, everyone is promoting you in your progress, pushing you towards your highest fortune. Such a land is there. To become a slave there is really to become a master. Whoever tends most toward slavery will be held by all as the head!

Just as in love of country. If a leader is most sacrificing, he naturally becomes the head of the party. Sacrificing is his qualification.

Generally, men have faith in one who has sacrificed much for the country, and they take him as their leader. But here in the mundane world, love of country is only extended selfishness. They will fight with another country. Or, for humanitarianism they will fight with other minerals or the vegetable or the animal kingdom. They are constructing a great civilization at the cost of the vegetable and mineral substances. The 'civilized' section are busy only to exploit nature, and that will have to be paid to the farthing to clear the debt.

All their comfort is more than a loan. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu wants his followers to be agents to preach Krsna's devotion to the public (*yare dekho, tare kaho, 'krsna' upadesa*) - speak about the special prospect of the land of Krsna, Vrndavana. To give oneself is the substance of devotion.

sravana-kirtanadinam, bhakty-anganam hi yajane

aksamasyapi sarvaptih, prapattyaiva harav iti

(Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam 1.40)

If one is not able, or does not have the opportunity to execute the different forms of services to Krsna, if he has only saranagati, he will accomplish everything in

the future. Saranagati will give everything.

Saranagati is the most fundamental and basic substance in the devotional world. The whole structure of the devotional world is based on saranagati. Without saranagati there can be no real entrance into the domain of service. Saranagati is the very life and essence of devotion, so it must be present in all forms of services. Without saranagati, service will be mere imitation, mere lifeless activity, and not devotion proper. Saranagati is the first condition. Prahlada Maharaja has said, *manye tad etad akhilam nigamasya satyam, svatmarpanam svasuhrdah paramasya pumsah*: the whole gist of Vedic teachings is svatmarpanam - to give and fully dedicate oneself to the Lord. To give oneself is the substance of all devotional activity. This is also stated by Sri Sridhara Swamipada in his commentary of the nine basic devotional practices (*sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam*, etc.). If devotional hearing, chanting, etc., is already dedicated to Him, only then will it get recognition as devotion, bhakti. Otherwise, everything is bogus. If I hear to fulfill my mundane purpose, then it is no longer bhakti. If I perform kirtana or speak Hari-katha to make some money, then it will not be bhakti. "Whatever I shall do, it is for Him." That sort of bond must first be 'signed' and then whatever will be done on that basis will be recognized as bhakti. This is the foundation of bhakti. Without saranagati, all attempts will be exploitation, renunciation, meditation (karma, jnana, yoga), anything but bhakti. "The result must always go to my Lord; I am His slave - nitya dasa."

"I am wholly His servant, without any independence to keep my independent property. Whatever I shall acquire, or whatever I shall do, the owner is He" *Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa*: *nitya dasa* means eternal servant, that is, slave. He has the right to make or mar, to do anything with me as He likes, according to His sweet will. So whenever we perform devotional hearing, chanting, remembering, with this feeling, that will be devotional activity. But if that is withdrawn, everything will go to hell. If the plank of the dancing stage is withdrawn, the whole show is gone. Therefore with saranagati, self-dedication, devotion is possible. Only the activity of the man of dedicated self can be reckoned as bhakti. He does everything on behalf of Krsna. He always takes Krsna's side, abandoning all separate interest for the fruit of his work.

Consciousness of separate interest (*dvityabhini-vesatah*) has made us separate from Krsna. The common interest is solely in Him. Then only our service will be bhakti.

Without that, everything is lost. Saranagati must be present in order to have living devotion, otherwise hear-ing and chanting are only forms, not life. Therefore saranagati means exclusive connection and identification with the interest of Krsna. And Krsna is not directly seen by us, so we serve the Guru and the Vaisnava who are dear to Him. According to the degree of our self-abnegation in self-surrender we will be benefited, and the specific characteristics of santa-, dasya-, sakhya-, vatsalya-, or madhura-rasa will develop, and there are also subdivisions within these rasas. In this way, the devotee will be properly located. But without saranagati, all the formal practices will lose their life and will become something other than bhakti, either in the plane of exploitation or the plane of renunciation; but the plane of dedication is the land of devotion.

By His sweet will, sometimes the attention of the Lord is drawn towards the most needy, and sometimes a more qualified person may be ignored. We cannot interfere with His independence: "Why have You shown mercy in this case, and not in mine?" We cannot take Him under law. That is not saranagati or surrender. When we put such a question to Him, we deviate from the position of saranagati; we cannot expect to be enlisted, even in the primary class.

If You come to examine my case, I am hopeless; so, I have come only for Your mercy.

So what is the spirit of saranagati? "If You come to consider my case, calculate my position, I have no hope. I am such a mean fellow; if You come to calculate right and wrong about me, I have no hope. So I have come to that school of Yours where only mercy will be my hope.

I want only Your mercy, but if You come to examine me, I have no hope." This is the primary necessity in our saranagati, in our surrendering. Surrender means this.

Surrender does not allow us to think, "Why have you shown grace to him and not to me?" This is anti-surrendering temperament. No calculation. "If You come to calculate, I have no hope; so if You can show me some grace - some causeless mercy - then I have that hope. I have come to this department of the Lord, by surrendering. Anyone may have His voluntary mercy, but I may not. If I hesitate and think about justice, then I am already canceled from the list. My name will be struck from the register."

This is one of the finest points in saranagati. What is surrender, and what should be the quality of surrender? *Marabi rakhabi yo iccha tohara* (Saranagati, 11): "According to Your sweet will, You can make or mar me." With such understanding we can go to surrender. Calculation is not allowed in that department of causeless mercy.

Mercy may be extended to everyone except me, but I have nothing to complain about. What more can one give than this? This is the thunderbolt from the blue! To become saranagata, to surrender, means to leave all prospects - to be so emptied - "I have no prospect"; to be fully emptied, and then to surrender. There cannot be the least application in the petition: surrender means a clean slate. Complete dependence upon Him means He can make or mar. I must admit my Master's right to make or mar. I am a slave. Mahaprabhu says, *jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa*.

That is Your constitutional position. Have you enough boldness to admit it? Can you admit that your Master has full rights over you?

"Yes! My Master has fullest rights over me. I am ready to go to eternal hell to supply His slightest pleasure." Such narrations - as for example, we have heard the story about when the Gopis were ready to supply their foot-dust as 'medicine' to alleviate Krsna's 'headache' - such narrations we may hear as very sweet to our ears, but to accept is horrible. *Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa*; no risk: no gain.

Whole risk: whole gain. Such confidence is necessary. A free, clear, and bold choice. Are you ready for that? Krsna is not like a sweetmeat, that His price may be so cheap or so expensive. He is everywhere He is nowhere. He may say, "You all belong to Me," or, "I don't care for any of you." We are inhabitants of that land now, and really, by constitution we have every right to serve Him. It is the truth, and we must be bold enough to 'call a spade a spade.'

Can you accept that you are the eternal servant - you are a slave of Krsna? And Krsna is so dignified that even His slave holds the highest position: Krsna's nature is such that He does not hesitate to serve even His slaves. He is so great and magnanimous. *Aham bhakta-paradhinah, hy asvatantra iva dvija* (Bha: 9.4.63): "I feel My tendency to serve My devotee in such a way that I am not independent; I feel Myself to be under their direction."

This is the nature of devotion - bhakti. Bhakti is infinitely more wonderful than jnana, knowledge. To 'know everything' is a very charming temptation. That makes one think that he has become the master of almost everything. But seva, service, is far above this kind of consciousness. Real knowledge practically becomes your servant, if you follow the path of surrender, saranagati. The Infinite comes within the fist of the finite. Can you imagine it? Is it imaginable?

Sometimes we hear about a great general falling into the clutches of a loving girl - a great dictator who commands a whole country's forces may be in the clutches of a girl. *Sri-krsnakarsini ca sa:* and Lord Krsna, the Autocrat, is controlled by love, and nothing else. Divine love, prema, is such, that it can control the Absolute Autocrat. Even He can be controlled, and this is the clue. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to distribute this; the Master of masters came with this offer:

"This path will lead you to a plane where you will be able to control the Master of masters."

brahmadi ye prema-bhakti-yoga vancha kare

taha vilaimu sarva prati ghare ghare

(Chaitanya Bhagavat, Adi 5. 152)

Mahaprabhu came as the most gracious Descent. He brought such nectar, even a drop of which is aspired after by the masters of the creation and dissolution of this visible world, Lord Brahma and Lord Siva.

Chapter 10 Beyond Doubt

martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma

niveditatma vicikirsito me

tad amrtatvam pratipadyamano

mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai

(Bhagavatam, 11.29.34)

"When a mortal totally abandons all karma and offers himself to My direction, at

that time he acts according to My sweet will and becomes one with Me - he attains the fitness to become My family member in his divine form of saccidananda nature."

This is a transformation that can be seen in the physical system also.

The physical cells undergo transformation. Old cells vanish - new cells grow. And this also occurs when one accepts prasadam, food offered to the Lord. A revolutionary transformation occurs.

Unconsciously, there is transformation in the physical system, by the gradual process of living a pious and divine life. Imperceptibly, the transformation takes place.

" *Martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma*: he has detached himself from all the activities of this so-called mundane world; *niveditatma* and he considers himself no longer a member of this material world. He has entered and enlisted in the family, in the entourage, of another plane.

And gradually he more and more intensely identifies himself as one of that family, that plane. *Niveditatma vicikirsito me*: he is very busy to find out what can please Me. That is his errand always. He is always seeking how to please Me. That is the only principle in him; he automatically thinks over and over again, 'How can I please Him? How can I please Him?' *Tad amrtatvam pratipadyamano*: then,

indispensably, such a change cannot but come in him: the necessary transformation. A transformation from mortality to immortality gradually occurs. The progress is sure and substantial.

Mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai: and consequently, he comes to be reckoned as one of My family members." Also in Bhagavad-gita, *visate tad anantaram*: "My devotee enters into My family."

With our bhajana (divine service), such transformation is inevitable. It must happen. Material hankering will be diminished. Mostly in rajo-and tamo-guna (the modes of passion and ignorance) there is

dissipation of vital energy, but in sattva-guna (truthfulness, realization) the energy lost is of much less quantity.

bhaktih paresanubhavo viraktir

anyatra caisa trika eka-kalah

prapadyamanasya yathasnatah syus

tustih pustih ksudapayo 'nughasam

(Bhagavatam, 11.2.42)

"As with every mouthful an eater feels the threefold effects of satisfaction, his stomach being filled, and his hunger being dispelled, in the same way when a surrendered soul serves the Lord he realizes devotion of three natures simultaneously: devotion in love, the personal appearance of the Lord who is the abode of love, and detachment from all other things."

Progress can be measured by detecting this kind of transformation within.

Paresanubhavo: somehow, a conception of the Supreme must grow clearer and clearer in me. What is He? Who is He? *Viraktir anyatra*: and indifference to everything 'non-Krsna' grows in me also.

I avoid what does not concern Krsna, and when it appears anyway, it produces some apathy or even irritation in me, "Oh, why has this thing come to me?" The measurement from the negative direction will be how much I am apathetic to 'non-Krsna' things. *Tustih pustih ksudapayo 'nughasam*: and also, the inner hunger should be felt to be fulfilled. "Yes, I am feeling fulfillment." I shall feel self-approval that I am walking in the right direction. I shall have inner sanction of my clear conscience. "Yes, yes, I am doing right." I will feel inner satisfaction.

bhidyate hrdaya-granthis, chidyante sarva-samsayah ksiyante casya karmani, mayi drste 'khilatmani

(Bhagavatam 11.20.30)

"When the soul directly beholds Me as the Supreme Soul within all souls, his mundane ego is dissolved, all his doubts are slashed, and all his worldly deeds (karma) are annihilated."

This is a scientific measurement, and of course, science of the transcendental world is not to be applied in the nature of the mundane By this standard of

adjustment, we shall gradually make progress towards proper adjustment. If the center is clear, then, of course, the circumference is properly located. Krsna consciousness is the center, and in that consciousness every event can be found to be properly adjusted. In this way, by that inner satisfaction and realization one can measure his personal progress. But this does not mean that his thirst will be quenched; rather, it will increase. But the assurance will come that the direction is the right direction. "I am now making progress in the proper line, because many new things can be explained by that formula. They seemed to be unintelligible and meaningless. Now, what I am told to be the Absolute is harmonizing all these things hitherto unharmonized. These points are being solved. So, *chidyante sarva-samsayah*: the doubts are being cleared, and more satisfaction of a wide and spacious nature, the solution, will be felt in the heart of one who is a real student, a regular student of the Bhagavata school.

Chidyante sarva-samsayah is a great thing. We cannot accommodate this within the narrow shell of our brain! "All doubts should be cleared? What is this?" It is inconceivable that all doubts will be cleared. But everything will be solved if we accept the harmonizing center in such a point as advised by Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu - Krsna-conception of the Absolute.

Absolute love and charm is all-accommodating. None can deny it.

None can say, "I don't want love." It is so universal. One may say, "I do not want any grandeur, any power," but, "I do not want any love" - never. Sometimes one may even go as far to say, "I don't want justice." That may be possible. Of course, generally it may be the exception, but still it may be said, "I don't want justice. By justice that man will suffer. Rather, I shall suffer, and that man be saved." Just as Jesus Christ told, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." By that prayer, Lord Christ set justice aside: "No, justice may go on this side, and let me be the sufferer." We can take the risk of dismissing justice, but we can't avoid love. We can give up everything but that love for love. If we have the eye to see, then we shall see that only to get love, prema, we can give up everything in the world. So how valuable is that thing? And Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam came with that.

Before the Srimad-Bhagavatam appeared in the world, Devarsi Narada came and gave a regular stricture to Srila Vyasadeva: "What have you done for so long? This is nothing! Rather, you did some downright wrong."

jugupsitam dharma-k rte 'nusasatah

svabhava-raktasya mahan vyatikramah

yad vakyato dharma idtarah sthito

na manyate tasya nivaranam janah

(Bhagavatam, 1.5.15)

"You have committed a great wrong. In your injunctions of religious duty for the masses, you have sanctioned condemnable worldly works for fulfillment of mundane desires. The masses are already by nature attached to condemnable worldly works for fulfillment of mundane desires. It is a great wrong because the worldly masses will conclude that your messages alone are the central religious duty. Even if they are taught by other knowers of the truth to refrain from those worldly works, they will not accept those teachings, or, they will not be able to understand them for themselves."

"The people generally have natural affinity for these things - dharma, artha, kama, and then moksa (religion, wealth, sense-pleasure, and liberation). You have recommended these four things in a regular and polished way, but this is already their natural demand. When one is over-fed, he wants fasting as a reaction. So, moksa is only a reaction to exploitation. This is already a fact, and you have recommended the same thing. What new thing have you given them? You have done wrong! Why? Because when a person of your status has recommended moksa, it will be difficult to give anything further. No one will be prepared to oppose your opinion, your standard. All will say that Vyasadeva is the highest authority, and that they don't care for the advice of anyone else. The highest authority is Vyasadeva. So it will be very difficult to get the people to accept through other sources anything beyond what you have given. So, you have done wrong! It may be considered your misdeed. Now, the only relief can be that you yourself will give the fifth end (beyond the aforementioned four common pursuits). You, personally, will have to take this work: 'So far what I have given is very limited, but now I shall give you something far superior.' You alone will have to take up this task, and only then you will have undergone the proper penance necessary for your chastisement. *Mahan vyatikramah* - it is a great wrong, because *jugupsitam* - what is very condemnable; *dharma-k rte* - is given under the stamp of religion; the goods under the stamp are ultimately non-

religious. What good is that? Only 'to do wrong and not to do wrong.'

But to do good - is it not included there? Of bad and non-bad, non-bad does not mean positive good. So, you will have to take this duty with earnestness and clarify the position for the people: 'So far, what I have given you is more or less of a negative character. Now I have come to give you something positive.' In this way, you must create the atmosphere to give them something substantial.

" *Dharma-projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmat-saranam satam* (the religion of the Srimad-Bhagavatam is free from the deceptions of the four ends of humanity, and it is the religion of the true saints).

Nirmatsara means 'an impartial mentality,' and *matsar* refers to the jealous. 'So far, I have given advices to that particular section which is not free from egoistic thinking. I have dealt with them. But now I shall deal with the normal-thinking - the good-hearted people. I shall now advise them.' Because it will be difficult to dissuade the people from the path taught by you, I have therefore come to you. Only through you can the higher, developed conception be given to them. This is the only way."

A new color given to everything delivered previously

So Sri Vyasadeva was chastised in this way by Devarsi Narada. Then, with an outline of ten basic principles (Bhagavatam, 2.20.1,2) he had to meditate, assimilate, and finally reproduce. Devarsi Narada left the asrama, and Sri Vyasadeva began to meditate and assimilate. "So far, this was my conception of religion and non-religion; now some new light has been given to me, and in perspective I have to think out the whole system; the whole system must be colored with a new color. A new color should be given to everything I delivered previously." So, he came to write Srimad-Bhagavatam.

And he also felt, " *Moksa*, the *Brahma-jnana* (liberation in the non-differentiated Absolute), has been given the highest position. Now, the higher conception that has been given to me by Devarsi Narada must be delivered to the world by a person whose *Brahma-jnana* is unquestionably admitted by all the scholars." So he searched for Sukadeva. "Sukadeva is the only person who is very widely respected by the so-called liberationists. This higher doctrine should be brought to light through him, and then the position of Bhagavatam will be automatically unchallengeable. So he hunted after Sukadeva.

He sent a woodsman whose business it was to cut down trees in the jungle and dense forest, and who made a trade from that. He told this sloka to that woodcutter:

nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad

bhavausadhac chrotra-mano 'bhiramat

ka uttamah-sloka-gunanuvadat

puman virajyeta vina pasughnat

"Wherever you will find a boy like my son, you will try to chant this sloka. You always wander in the dense forest, and my boy is there, roaming hither and thither in the jungle. It is very difficult to trace his whereabouts, because he does not stay in one location. Always roaming and wandering, he lives on only leaves and fruits, and he takes water from the river."

Suddenly one day, this sloka caught Sukadeva's attention. "What do these woodcutters say?"

nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad

bhavausadhac chrotra-mano 'bhiramat

ka uttamah-sloka-gunanuvadat

puman virajyeta vina pasughnat

"This big sound, with high meaning „where did they get it from?"

Then after hearing twice, thrice, he approached them. "What do you say?" They again repeated, " *Nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad*: who have had all their thirst quenched, satisfied - they come and sing this song; *bhavausadhac*: it is the medicine for the solution to birth and death; *srotra-mano 'bhiramat*: and it is always pleasing to the senses. The senses should not be considered as one's eternal enemy, and eliminated from any utility. They can be utilized. This song is very sweet for all the senses. *Srotra-mano 'bhiramat*: both the ear and mind are pleased by a high class of joy. *Ka uttamah-sloka-gunanuvadat puman virajyeta vina pasughnat*: who but a suicide will keep such a conception of life, such a

model ideal of his life, at a distance? Only a self-killer can do so! Otherwise, one who is wakeful to his real interest can never avoid the *uttamah-sloka-gunanuvada* - the praise and prayer of the highest entity, the Lord Absolute. Who can keep himself aloof from this highest conception of life which is beyond even *moksa*?"

Then, after having a glimpse into the meaning of this sloka, this poem of Bhagavatam, Sukadeva inquired,

"Where did you obtain this sloka?"

"At Badarikasrama."

"Can you show me the place?"

"Yes, come."

And they took him to Vyasadeva. He could recognize, "Oh, this is my father's asrama. Vyasadeva, my father, requested me to stay with him, but I did not care for that. I ran away to the forest to avoid human society. To avoid being influenced by human society's designing attitude, I left it. However, for the solution I find in this sloka, I cannot but inquire from him."

So he came, and asked his father the meaning of the sloka. Srila Vyasadeva then explained according to the angle of vision that Devarsi Narada had recently given him. And when Sukadeva later delivered the Srimad-Bhagavatam, he openly admitted in the assembly:

parinisthito 'pi nairgunye, uttamahsloka-lilaya

grhita-ceta rajarse, akhyanam yad adhitavan

tad aham te 'bhidhasyami, mahapaurusiko bhavan

yasya sraddadhatam asu, syan mukunde matih sati

(Bhagavatam, 2.1.9,10)

When Pariksit Maharaja inquired from Sri Sukadeva Goswami, Sukadeva first introduced himself in this way: "O sage among kings, despite being excellently

merged in the transcendental Brahman, I have studied this Srimad-Bhagavatam because my heart was attracted by the pastimes of the Supreme Lord Uttamasloka.

"King, you are a devotee, and as such you are most qualified to come to Krsna, the Supreme Person; there-fore I shall explain this narrative scripture to you. Swiftly does divine love for the Supreme Lord Mukunda arise within the heart of one who has developed faith in this Srimad-Bhagavatam."

Sri Sukadeva Goswami told Maharaja Pariksit, "You seem to be a student of a high standard of learning (*maha-paurusiko bhavan*).

There are many seekers of their future fortune, but you are a bona fide student; presently death is encroaching upon you, so no ordinary aspirations are in your mind. You are a genuine student and inquirer.

Dharma, artha, kama, and *moksa* (religion, wealth, sense pleasure, and liberation) are known as the fourfold ends of human inquiry (*purusartha*), but because I consider you to be the most bona fide and sincere seeker of truth (*mahapaurusiko*), I think I can teach you what I have heard from my dear father very recently; I consider that to be the highest end of every life.

The highest standard of education

adhitavan dvaparadau, pitur dvaipayana ad aham

(Bhagavatam, 2.1.8)

tad aham te 'bhidhasyami, mahapaurusiko bhavan

(Bhagavatam, 2.1.10)

"At the end of Dvapara-yuga, I studied this Maha-purana Srimad-Bhagavatam from my father, Sri Krsna-dvaipayana Vyasa. I conceive that to be the highest standard of education and you are the fittest man to receive it. Therefore I shall deliver it to you."

Saying this, he began the talk of Bhagavatam. And there he gave the principle of Krsna consciousness, that harmonizes all classes.

To receive descending spiritual knowledge in this way is the method of the deductive school. And the nature of such fit recipients is described as *nirmatsara* - they are free from jealousy. Those who are suffering the disease of jealousy cannot tolerate anyone holding a higher position than themselves. They cannot tolerate the merit of others: "I am the best. None can be greater than me." This is their disease (*matsara*). But the Srimad-Bhagavatam is for those who are free from the disease of such a mean egoistic feeling. The students that come forward to read the Bhagavatam must be of such character that they have conquered that mean egoistic sentiment of considering oneself to be all-in-all. When that sort of mean, egoistic feeling is removed, one will be fit to study Bhagavatam, and he will successfully imbibe the teachings herein and make a great and inconceivably divine improvement in his life.

Vedyam vastavam atra vastu sivatam: "I am not dealing with an imaginary concoction. This is *vastava-vastu*, a realistic thought which death and mortality cannot challenge. I am dealing with such a thing here. The whole world you are living in is unreal, but what I am dealing with here is the only reality. The realistic thought is not unreal. You are suffering from the mania of unreality.

Tapatrayonmulanam: and your disease will be wholesale cured. The disease and its effect - your suffering - will be uprooted to the extreme."

Chapter 11 The Guardian-ruled Family

"The Vaisnava is all in all, and I am nothing." Such a feeling grows infinitely in the Vaisnava. "I am nothing, but he is everything - he is a Vaisnava; Guru and Vaisnava really hold Krsna-bhakti. They are the stockists. But I am empty-handed; I have nothing." This is the nature of the association of the finite with the infinite. As much as we shall have a real approach towards the infinite, we cannot but consider ourselves to be the meanest of the mean. The standard of Vaisnava qualification (*vaisnavata*) is measured in this way. And this is not lip-deep, but the sincere dealing of the innermost heart. When Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami says, *purisera kite haite muni sei laghistha* - "I am lower than the worm in stool" - this is not mere imitation, but his heartfelt truth. *Acarya-abhimana*, the assertion of the Guru over his disciple, is a different posture. That is assertion, but only for the service of the Vaisnava; the sincerity is maintained therein. The Guru's assertion is not selfish assertion. His assertion is only for the sake of saving the public and upholding the prestige of the Vaisnava. So that is proper adjustment with reality, in twofold senses: to establish the real position of

a Vaisnava, and at the same time to save the ordinary persons from the danger and the reaction of false attempt or false thought. So that kind of assertion is not egoistic.

Rather, we should know that as sacrifice in the dynamic sense.

In *Visva-vaishnava-raja-sabha*, our Guru Maharaja tactfully managed in this way: he asked one of his disciples to speak something in praise and appreciation of another disciple. And he especially asked this of disciples who were a little antagonistic to one another. He asked them, "Speak something in praise of your 'friend.' " Why? To try to mark the bright side, the svarupa, and to try to ignore the apparent side. He instructed, "You try to speak something in praise of your friend, your apparent opponent." The Guru's order was given, and so the disciple had to speak something in praise. Necessity is the mother of invention; he had to dive deep into the bright side of the other person and try to bring that side out. Thereby, the Vaisnava atmosphere of giving and taking was aroused and the apparent, mayika side was gradually ignored, disregarded and dissipated. Something similar happens in kirtana as well. Why is kirtana so powerful? Because when we are requested to speak something, we cannot but utilize our best attention to speak. We have to assert our best ability in the attempt to gather the proper information to speak something about the Supreme Lord. So, also, in the case of the Vaisnava, as in the case of the Lord, we must approach the svarupa, the inner side, the inner aspect, the bright side - and ignore the apparent side; and thereby we will thrive. There, the real mutual relationship will be aroused. Once a year in the Holy Dhama of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, it was the practice of our Guru Maharaja to preside in a meeting under the banner of *Visva-vaishnava-raja-sabha* (Universal Assembly of the Topmost Pure Devotees), and there his method was such: "Try to praise the Vaisnava."

So, to appreciate the nobility of a Vaisnava may be difficult, but if we can do so, we may have a chance to reach a standard of real devotion to a certain extent. It is said by the Lord in the *Adi Purana*, "One who 'loves Me' does not really love Me; but one who loves My servitors - his love for Me is more real; it is true and of absolute character." We must try to appreciate the character and conduct of the Vaisnava, and thereby we can raise the standard of our own life of dedication.

The infinitesimal and the infinite are very closely connected. The consciousness of the infinitesimal is in this line:

ye yata patita haya, tava daya tata taya,

tate ami supatra dayara

(Gitamala, Yamuna-bhavavali 19)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "Your grace is given in accordance with the necessity of those who really deserve it. In that consideration, I have some claim. I am fallen of the fallen, the most fallen, so I have some claim to Your grace." That should be the attitude of the servitors. Increase the negative side. "I am the most deserving because I am meanest of the mean, poorest of the poor." We have to increase and develop our knowledge towards that side: "I am so low, so needy, so mean, in all respects." That consciousness will draw Him towards you; the mass energy collected (karma) or the attempt to know Him (jnana) cannot do so (*jnana-karmady-anavrtam*). To think, "I can know You, I can measure You" - that is impossible, wild goose-chasing, and this has been declared by Srimad-Bhagavatam. You can never know Him. The closer you come to the boundary of your knowledge, the more you will find Him transcending it. None can bind Him. That was shown in the attempt of Mother Yasoda. When she went to bind Damodara, Krsna, around the waist, the rope was always two fingers short.

yad asit tad api nyunam, tenanyad api sandadhe

tad api dvy-angulam nyunam, yad yad adatta bandhanam

(Bhagavatam, 10.9. 16)

"(After joining the original rope with another) that rope was also short by the measure of two fingers. Then she tied more rope; that also was short by the same treasure. In this way, no matter how much rope she added, it was always short by two fingers."

It is a mathematically impossible margin, but it is such. Similarly, we must know that the Absolute is subjective not objective. Examples like this show us the failure of the objective calculation. Don't go to calculate the transcendental truth by the objective process. The factor of His will can never be eliminated, and that is the real factor. If you approach to calculate about Him, the most realistic thought you must keep in your mind is that it depends on His Supreme Will. He is abhijna, omniscient, and svarat, fully independent. Only He knows what is what and what should be what. It is His monopoly, within His fist. You may

conjecture so many alternatives, but to no avail. He knows what He will do; and at the same time, He is not under any obligation to anyone. He cannot be compelled to give any explanation for His deeds. Only He knows what is what, and He is the Absolute Autocrat (*arthesv abhijnah svarat*, Bhagavatam, 1.1.1). He does not care for the consideration of others. If we approach Him with this kind of understanding and impression, we must advance towards the divine realm.

I have no possibility of pressing any demand on Him. There is no possibility of placing any application, "Please consider this or that."

But at the same time, we must not forget that He listens only to the words of the devotee who is actually of such a temperament (*aham bhakta-paradhinah*, Bha: 9.4.63). This, also, cannot be eliminated.

But who is such a bhakta? One who knows the Lord's nature in this way - he's a devotee. So, to become submissive to him is in other words to keep one's own independence! To be submissive to the surrendered soul amounts to no submission, because it is to submit to a person who is fully His. When He says, "I am subservient - I work under the direction of My devotee," then who are the devotees? They are those who have surrendered cent-per-cent to His sweet will. Then, in other words, they are as independent as He is. They do not have their independent wishes, but nonetheless, for the sake of the Lord's pastimes, lila, such things are designed by Yogamaya.

Lila has no rhyme and reason; it is dynamic existence

In different rasas we may see that the devotee and the Lord sometimes take opposite sides. Just as Krsna wants to steal, and Yasoda won't allow Him to steal, and she is punishing Him. Apparently they seem to be opposing forces, but Yogamaya, the internal potency of the Lord, is acting. Somehow it is Krsna's will to play like that. A director of a drama may order his actors, "You must say like this; and I shall oppose." Lila also is a movement to one point, harmoniously without any disturbance. This is lila. Lila has no rhyme and reason. It is dynamic existence. It is just the opposite of the fossil. And lila is of the nature of rasa or ananda, beauty and charm. Beauty and charm are the very nature of the Lord.

To become disconnected from that original flow is the trouble caused by maya. The conditioned souls are under the potency of maya, as though suffering the

disease of insanity. They have lost their own property and wealth. This is maya. Ma means 'what is not,' and ya means 'that.' The word maya is also derived, *miyate anaya iti maya*: maya is 'that by which measurement is made.' The spiritual experts inform us that separate interest has been the root cause of all disturbance (*dvitiyabhinivesatah syat*). Really everything is all right, but the spirit of separatism is responsible for the whole anomaly.

bhayam dvitiyabhinivesatah syad

isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih

tan-mayayato budha abhajat tam

bhaktyaikayesam gurudevataatma

(Bha: 11.2.37)

"A person who turns away from the Lord forgets his own innate identity by dint of the maya potency of the Lord, and his perception becomes topsy-turvy whereby he thinks, 'I am the body.' From this, he becomes absorbed in separate interest, identifying himself with the body, senses, etc. This is the cause of all apprehension. Therefore, a judicious person should worship that Supreme Lord with exclusive devotion, casting aside all spurious desires, and with the knowledge that Gurudeva is one's worshipful lord and dearest friend."

The first stage of deviation is due to separate or self-interest

To think "I can thrive individually," is to ignore the collective line and try for one's separate interest. This fine point is said to be responsible for all the disturbance: "I wanted to seek my own pleasure, separating myself from the consideration of collectiveness." The next stage is *isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih*: deviation from consideration of my master. The first stage is self-interest, and then next is deviation from guardian- consciousness, or to lose the consciousness that "I have my master, my guardian." Separate interest means, "I am my own guardian." Then, *tan-mayayato*: why is it so? Because I am *tatastha*, marginal.

On the other side is maya, and somehow that influence has captured my weak decisive faculty. I am an infinitesimal particle of consciousness with minute independence. But without my cooperation, the mayika or mundane transaction

is impossible. So my consent was necessary. With the consent of a minor child, the guardian can do anything and everything. The minority or infinitesimal character is inherent in me, and that makes room for this error. *Tan-mayayato budha abhajat tam*: but because maya is not independent, she also has to work under the guidance of the Supreme Authority; so don't go to maya, but go to He who is the Master of maya. *Tan-mayayato budha, abhajat tam - na tu mayam*. Although maya is coming to capture the soul because of his weakness of cooperating with her, still, *budha*, which means *sumedha* - the pious souls - will go for relief to the Master of *maya*. This is the decision of Srīmad-Bhagavatam. *Tan-maya* means *tasya maya* - His *maya*. *Maya* is not the highest entity; she also has her Master. So when the temptation comes in you to perform a bad deed you must file an appeal for help to the Supreme Authority, and not to *maya*.

In the Bhagavad-gita also the Lord says:

daivi hy esa gunamayī, mama maya duratyaya

mam eva ye prapadyante, mayam etam taranti te

(Bhagavad-gita.7.14)

"This trimodal supernatural or alluring deluding potency of Mine is practically insurmountable. However, those who exclusively surrender unto Me can certainly surpass this formidable fantasy."

Maya, misunderstanding, is troubling the fallen souls, but misunderstanding itself cannot give them relief. The Prime Cause of misunderstanding - He alone can give them relief. "So don't go to that side, come to Me. By My instruction that maya will leave you. She's more powerful than you; *daivi* - she has higher backing, so you must try to seek your relief from the higher office, and not approach directly to maya. That will not be helpful to you. If you have My slightest backing, you can easily escape from that *maya*."

Misunderstanding is there, but it is not very powerful inasmuch as it does not have its own support - it is not independent. It is also dependent on truth. Truth has the better position over misunderstanding. So your transaction should always be with the truth, with the positive. And what is positive truth? *Sat-cit-anandam*: unassailable existence, self-consciousness, and fulfillment. It is fulfillment in itself. In Hegelian philosophy, unassailable existence is described as 'by itself

and for itself.' The conscious element in the middle has been suppress-ed in that philosophy. The Absolute Truth feels His Self-consciousness. He feels that He exists. Stone exist-ence may not feel its existence, but soul perceives his existence; he is cit or *cetana* - conscious. But his consciousness is not perfect. It has some want, some demand, some hankering for a higher life. Anandam or rasa is beauty, harmony, love. That is the conception of the fullest integer: having existence, consciousness, and also fulfillment. Not only hankering or knowing is present, but that which is to be hankered for or known about is present there, and that is anandam. Anandam and sundaram are synonymous.

I saw that some of the European philosophers have translated this word anandam as 'beauty,' as in 'Reality the Beautiful.' We find that to be very near to the conception of Krsna. Probably it was the philosopher Martineau, a very good linguist and a poet of high style, who proposed that the ultimate element is 'Reality the Beautiful.'

Wordsworth hinted at 'eye-beauty' and 'ear-beauty.' In one poem Wordsworth described a girl of his dreams. He wrote that she was a village girl, and there was a brook alongside that village. He says that the jingling sound of the brook contributed to her beauty. Many scholars tried to give some interpretation to this conception, but one Bengali scholar, Harinath De, who was a master of thirty-two languages, gave the interpretation: 'ear-beauty contributed to eye-beauty.' His explanation was very taking to me. The ear-beauty, the beautiful sound of the brook, added to the appearance of that girl; that means that ear-beauty, or sweet sound, contributed to eye-beauty. Eye beauty, nose-beauty, touch-beauty, etc., all are anandam, rasam, or beauty in the broadest sense.

In another Upanisadic word, it is stated, *satyam, sivam, sundaram*.

Siva means *mangalam*. What is the criterion of *mangalam*?

Amangalam means mortal: mortal is *amangalam* (inauspicious). And immortality is *sivam, mangalam* (auspicious). So *sivam* means immortal, and that means conscious, as found in the soul. Soul is immortal. So, stone is mortal, but soul is immortal. Therefore, soul proper is *siva*; but we see that the soul is vulnerable. Supersoul is beauty, *sundaram*. That is concrete reality as the independent and fullest representation of existence. All other existences are but partial representations of the Absolute. *Sundaram* is satisfaction; the soul is dissatisfied, and for stone there is no question of satisfaction; it possesses only

mere existence. But soul is dissatisfied, even though he is an eternal unit of self-consciousness. The words *Siva*, *Mrtyunjaya* and *Maha-deva* mean 'free from mortality or change; eternal.' But mere eternity is not sufficient. Only *rasam* or *sundaram* can fill the gap. So *sundaram* is the object of our quest. If wherever we go and whatever we do is examined minutely it will be detected that we are searching after beauty, after fulfillment, after *sundaram*, after *rasam*.

na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum

durasaya ye bahir artha-maninah

(Bhagavatam, 7.5 31)

"Those whose minds have been polluted by mundane sense-pleasure, and who hold respect for sense-enjoyers addicted to external mundane pleasures - they cannot know of the glories of Lord Visnu, the exclusive refuge of those desirous of attaining the supreme goal of human life."

Externally and ignorantly, it may be seen that we are in quest of this and that - duty, money, sense-pleasure (*dharma*, *artha*, *kama*); but this is an external and partial examination of things. But with a deep examination it must be found that we are eagerly searching for only *rasam*, *sundaram*: the fullest satisfaction, and not for partial, temporary so-called pleasure. So *dharma*, *artha*, and *kama* cannot satisfy our inner hankering. Not to speak of them, even liberation (*moksa*) from the present flickering hankering is not the goal, and this is the finding of the scholars. Mere liberation from the negative side is an artificial life. Life must have its fulfillment. Everything has its fulfillment and necessary position. It is not meant for nothing! Zero cannot be the conclusion of the whole existence. Infinite is the conclusion, not zero. So mere liberation - to remain as in a long, deep slumber - that is destructive and inconclusive. That cannot be the object of creation or the object of our existence. The other side must be searched out - the *cid-vilasa* (the transcendental dynamic plane).

And where can we get that? Here in this world is exploitation, and there is just the opposite: dedication.

Bhakti is dedication, after surrender to the center. As I mentioned earlier, we have drifted into separate interest. Now we must give up that separate interest and enter into the undivided family; we must accept the guardian. We have been advised to enter the guardian-ruled family. We have to adjust ourselves to live in

a family under guardianship. But we shall strive to understand that life under a guardian is the wholesome and healthy life. We need not search after our full independence, for that independence cannot solve the problem we are faced with. There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a problem. Apparently, it may be thought that by independence the problem may be solved. But it is wrong.

The scriptures and mahajananas come to our help: "No! At present you may think that independence will give you proper satisfaction of your inner heart, but really it is wrong. Your apparent thought is your enemy. You want to get out of any circumstantial infringement, and if you get freedom you'll be happy - this is wrong. Rather, the opposite is true. You should try to live in a joint family. You must be accommodative; you must correct your nature. Your independence is your enemy."

This must be understood. This independence that apparently seems to be your friend is really your enemy, and you must learn how to live together with others. You cannot separate yourself from the

environment; it is not possible. That is death, samadhi, or the infinite slumber. That is no life, that is no answer, that is no solution. You must live with many. You must see that you are a part of the whole, and that only your spirit of independence is disturbing you. And you must try to save yourself from the hands of your 'friends.' "God, save me from my friends, my so-called friends." Only surrender can give you relief, can give you the real, higher life.

You will be able to understand that from your innermost heart. In Bhagavad-gita, Krsna has repeatedly hammered this *raga-dvesa* - apathy and sympathy (*raga-dvesa-vi-muktais tu*, Bg. 2.64) Those two are your enemies. Apathy for something and sympathy for something - these are your enemies! Be independent of those two enemies, and concentrate yourself towards your guardian. Know that He is not partial. Your first consideration should be that the guardian is not partial. "I am guardian, but I am friendly to you all (*suhrdam sarva-bhutanam*, Bhagavad-gita, 5.29). Don't leave this thought! I am your guardian, but at the same time I am your friend. Don't forget this, otherwise there alone is the danger in your whole life."

Be optimistic, don't be pessimistic. You are good and all around you is bad, and withdrawal from everything and everyone will give you real bliss? Don't be so selfish-thinking. That is your environment; they should be relied upon - they also

have goodness in them. So try to adjust yourself with them. *Tat te 'nukampam* (Bhagavatam, 10.14.8): all our situations in life occur by His grace. Especially try to adjust with the Guardian who is at the bottom of all movement and all creation. Have faith in Him, and through Him, approach your environment. Then everything will be properly adjusted.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam it is said:

sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed, bhagavad-bhavam atmanah

bhutani bhagavaty atmany, esa bhagavatottamah

(Bhagavatam, 11.2.45)

We can attain the highest position in this way. Whatever and whoever we come across, we must see it at the central interest and not from provincial or local interest. Go straight to the center: *bhagavad-bhavam*. Then, *atmanah*. Try to see the center in everything, and then in connection with or through the center, come to approach your environment. First go to the center, and from the center, knowing your relationship with the center, come to adjust with your surroundings and company. What is a person's relationship to the center, and what is my relationship to the center? Considering these two factors, I shall ascertain what shall be my relationship with that person. My connection with everything and everyone should be ascertained through the center. My relationship with others must be calculated from the central interest, not the local or partial interest between them.

That will be wrong, and that is the root of all evil. This separate relationship is not wholesome. Only go straight to see things through the eye of the interest of the center, and your relationship will descend (*sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed, bhagavad-bhavam - atmanah*). Next, *bhutani bhagavaty* and then *atmani* - vice versa: what is God's relationship with the thing, and what is the thing's relationship with God; and according to that calculation, you come into adjustment with them, with your environment. Then you are out of danger. But eliminating the central interest, if you want to mix together and get your local benefit satisfied in the meantime, you'll be in danger (*yo mam pasyati sarvatra . . . pranasyati*, Bhagavad-gita, 6.30; *sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed . . . esa bhagavatottamah*, Bhagavatam, 11.2.45).

So the environment is not bad. We are suffering from misunderstanding, *maya*

(*na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum*), and that misunderstanding should be cleared. We shall try to live anywhere and everywhere, and we shall see the environment as all-loving, if we have that deep vision to see who is at the basis of all of us, if we find Him. It is also mentioned in the Upanisads that in pure consciousness, one can see nectar everywhere in the wind, in the ocean, in the plants, in the stars every-where.

Try to recognize that your situation is full of honey - full of nectar.

Don't try to see only the outer cover. Your vision must be deep enough to see the real position. Then you will find everything is like nectar to you. *Srnavantu visve amrtasya putrah*. This clarion-call is coming from the Veda: "O you sons of nectar! Attempt to listen to my words! You are really sons of the nectar lake. Why should you be like poison? Are you a poisonous unit? Are you now down-trodden to become units of poison? But your real, innate self - you are a drop of the nectar ocean!" *Srnavantu visve amrtasya putrah* - "Awake! Arise! Arise to your self-consciousness that you are a drop of the nectar ocean! Try to realize it!"

Dive deep and you will find nectar - no poison

"Your attachment to the outer cover - not only the covers outside but of yourself also - all are covers in reality. Don't be a 'cover-calculator.' Dive deep into your own self, in the existence of your environment.

Dive deep, and you will find all nectar, no poison. Poison is a thing superficial to your real conception." To make much of the cover of things, ignoring the substance within, is nothing but cover transaction (*na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum, durasaya ye bahir artha-maninah*). It is poisonous.

In this world, we may think we find something to be beautiful, but beauty in local interest is not real beauty. We have to be able to distinguish between the central interest and the local interest. Beauty for individual possession is poison. We are desirous of independence to enjoy that local beauty. This is the trap. But beauty is meant for the service of Krsna. Everything is meant for Him - there we will find real beauty. The real nature of beauty is present in that which is attractive to Krsna. Beauty should be measured from the central consideration. The danger lies in consideration of beauty from the separate interest viewpoint.

Get out of the waves of local interest

What is beauty? An object to be enjoyed. To be enjoyed by whom? If by me, then I am lost. Everything is meant for Him, and we have to enjoy beauty like that. If that is possible, we are all right. Whenever we see anything beautiful, it must come to our minds, "Oh, Krsna will be able to enjoy this very much." Our mentality should be like this.

Our mentality should be 'center-centered': "Whatever good I see will immediately remind me that Krsna will enjoy it very much." The tasteful - "Krsna has enjoyed this curry; I shall enjoy it subsidiarily.

My position is dependent upon how Krsna has enjoyed."

Everything should be seen through Him, and only after that - 'mine.'

Sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavam atmanah. 'Mine' should mean 'how Krsna has enjoyed.' Everything may be fittingly enjoyed by Him. I must be Krsna-centered. Then other centers such as beauty to be enjoyed by any other person, not to speak of oneself, will be recognized as risky and poisonous. Beauty - everything - is to be enjoyed by Him. It is meant, it is created, it is sustained - for Him. We must reach this understanding, for this is to be situated in the deepest plane. This is *nirguna*, transcendental. Otherwise, all is *saguna*, or superficial. Get out of the *saguna*, the waves of local interest That may be centered in a family, a village, a country, a species, or human society to the exception of birds, beasts and insects - the circle may increase, but it is still limited. But properly adjusted, we want nothing less than Krsna, so everything must be connected with Him and seen through His interest. My interest should not entertain any independent friendship with anyone. Everything should be done on Krsna's account. Negotiation, transaction, and future prospect - everything is for the center, Krsna. In this way, everything will come to me through the Absolute Good. Then all the poison will be eliminated and whatever comes to me will be mixed with nectar.

So whatever we contact must come via Krsna or His bona fide servant - Gurudeva or Vaisnava, whose cause is inseparable from Krsna's. We can rely upon them. Somehow, everything must percolate through the Absolute Good - not vulnerable or limited goodness - but the Absolute Good. Via that, all transactions between the plurality must be checked and sent as prasadam

(merciful remnants) from the center. That should be the proper attitude. And that is really sweet.

If we can come into that plane, we shall feel this. Otherwise, our actions will be performed as duty, by scriptural injunction and so on.

But if we can reach the plane of the Absolute Good, our own soul or existence and practical life will bear testimony for us that this life is the topmost, and without it, we cannot live.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "*Esaba chodata parana harau*: Sri Vrndavana and its surroundings so intensely awaken my remembrance of Krsna; and if these things are taken away from me, I shall lose my very life. They are sustaining me, because they are encouraging me to take to Krsna consciousness. They are all encouraging and helping me towards Krsna consciousness in different aspects. Whatever I see there, *radha-kunda-tata-kunja-kutira*, *govardhana-parvata-yamuna-tira* (the dwelling in the groves on the banks of Sri Radhakunda, the holy Govardhana mountain, the banks of the holy Yamuna river) - reminds me in such a sweet way, taking me towards Krsna conception and Krsna-lila, spreading nectar in my heart. If I am to leave them, then I shall leave my existence. They are all around me; they are so encouraging and life-giving to me. They are so fulfilling to my life - indeed, they are more than my life! *Kusuma-sarovara*, *manasa-ganga*, *kalindanandini vipula-taranga* (the holy lake midway between Mathura, Govardhana, and Radha-kunda, the river at the edge of Govardhana, the rolling waves of the Yamuna); *kha-ga-mrga-kula*, *malaya-batasa* (the birds and animals, the breezes of spring) what a sweet contribution all these things offer me! Krsna is very near to me!

I would die without them. Such beauty, the whole thing takes me with lightning speed directly towards Krsna consciousness, towards His Associates and His pastimes with Them. That is direct nectar, and that will come in me."

radhakundatata-kunjakutira

govardhanaparvata yamunatira

kusumasarovara, manasaganga

kalindanandini vipula-taranga

vamsivata, gokula, dhirasamira
vrndavana-taru latika-vanira
khaga-mrgakula, malaya-batasa
mayura, bhramara, murali-vilasa
venu, srnga, padacihna, meghamala
vasanta, sasanka, sankha karatala
yugala vilase anukula jani
lilavilasa-uddipaka mani
esaba chodata kaha nahi yau
esaba chodata parana harau
bhaktivinoda kahe, suna kana
taya uddipaka hamara parana

The grove-dwelling on the banks of Radha-kunda,
Govardhana mountain, the banks of river Yamuna;
Kusuma-sarovara lake, Manasa-ganga river,
The rolling waves of Yamuna, daughter of the sun;
Place of the Rasa dance, and Gokula, the gentle breezes,
The trees, vines, and Vetasa palms of Vraja;
The birds and animals, the sweet air of spring,
The peacocks, bumblebees, the flute's sweet song;
Flute, horn, His footsteps, range of clouds in the sky,

Season of spring, the moon, the conch, hand-cymbals;

I know all these things are nourishing the pastimes of the Divine Couple,

I can feel they arouse the holy pastimes of the Lord;

I can never leave all these things so dear to me,

Without them I know I'll surely die;

Hear me, O Kan, says Sri Bhaktivinoda:

You are the only light of my life.

This is Vrndavana. Vrndavana is so friendly, so sweet, so near to us, and such a well-wisher of ours. We are quite at home there - sweet, sweet home. *Svarupe sabara haya, golokete sthiti*: in our innate and innermost existence, we are members of that plane. Now we have come out, and we have scattered our consciousness all over the surface. Cover, cover, cover - there are so many layers, and they are all dry things. And the substance, the spirit, is within. Eliminating this bodily cover, the mental cover, the liberation cover, the Vaikuntha cover - then I may enter into the land of Vraja. Vrndavana resides within me, if I can find my friends everywhere. They are my friends and relatives, and they will give me all-pleasing experience, ecstasy.

Mahaprabhu came with this news for us. "Oh, you are a child of that soil; why do you suffer here, my children, my boys? Why do you suffer? *Amrtasya-putrah*: you are a child of that soil, and you are suffering so much, coming in the desert? Your home is so resourceful, so sweet, and you are running in the desert? What is this? Come!

Leave this poisonous charm, this suicidal charm. This charm, *maya* charm, misunderstanding charm - this is suicidal. Leave this apparent charm! This is poisonous, like a witch. The witch has charmed you here and made you spellbound. Come along with Me! I shall take you to your home which is so very sweet!"

Mahaprabhu takes us to the East side

In general, this is the call of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Nityananda

Prabhu. Don't try to think yourself a master of so *many siddhis like anima, laghima, vyapti* (becoming small as the atom, lighter than a feather all-pervading, etc.). The thought that you can play with miracles is all lower conception. With *mukti* (liberation), then *siddhi* (yogic super-natural mystic powers), you will have to encounter so many traps and obstacles that your very existence will be at stake. To the South there is the *Bhimarula-varuli*, the hornet's nest of unfulfilled desires (*karma-kanda*); to the West, there is the Yaksha, the deceitful ghost representing the death of merging into the Absolute by supernatural yoga-practice (*yoga- siddhi*); and to the North there is the *Ajagara*, the black python representing the death of merging into the Absolute Brahman by the liberationists on the path of knowledge (*jnana-marga*). They will all bewilder you. But most naturally and with the least effort on your part, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu will take you to the Eastern side, to the wealth that is within your heart.

That is universal, spacious, sweet, and most intimate. There is your home, all are mutual well-wishers there. That is the gift of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Gaura Hari bol!

Chapter 12 Every Word is a Song

"Where every word is a song, every step is a dance, and the flute is the favorite attendant . . ."

(Sri Brahma-samhita)

Every word is a song . . . but this is not a sound of this plane. This is from some other world, some other world that is so soft, so sweet, so heart-capturing. It is a world where correct behavior occurs most sweetly and harmoniously. Every word is like a song (*katha ganam*).

Every movement is sweet, like dancing (*natyam gamanam api*). It has been described in this way. Everything is replete with the highest degree of beauty. This is the land of beauty - there everything is beautiful. Everything has the touch of beauty divine. The prime cause is charming, attracting, and arresting heart and soul, "Stop!"

There is a land of such existence. Our aspiration is for such a life (*radhika-madhavasam*). We can sincerely foster the idea to feel attraction to a life of such

a plane, where everything is of a musical character. The flute of Krsna guides everything. That can even draw out the life from the body.

The sound is so charming, it appears that one's very feeling wants to come out of bodily existence. What-ever part of our body is touched with any sort of such dealing, that part seems to disconnect from the other parts, and - if it is possible to imagine it - that part runs to join the subject. If there is color, the eye wants to feel it, as though separating himself from the other parts of the body. There is such a competition: "I don't want your connection, O body! I want to run towards that direction - a call has come from there." The hands, the eyes, the touch - all faculties will compete; whatever part is touched will want to run away from the other friendly companions.

Once, after conducting the parikrama (circumambulation) of the whole Vraja-mandala (the perimeter of Sri Vrndavana), Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada asked his disciples, "Which pastimes attracted you most? Which location in Vrndavana has attracted you most?" When he asked me this question, I replied that Kadamkhandi, the place of Srila Rupa Goswami Prabhu's bhajana, attracted me most of all. Midway between Nandagram and Yavat there was an asrama where Srila Rupa Goswami settled and used to write his book Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu. That place attracted me most. Again, after a year or two, when we were at Sri Radha-Kunda in the company of Srila Prabhupada, he very suddenly remarked, "Your place. That place of yours . . . I was astounded. "What, where is my place?" He said, "Your place is Kadamkhandi, the place of Srila Rupa Goswami." I thought, "Oh, he had some purpose when he inquired a year or two ago which location was attractive to who; he kept these things on his mind, and accordingly today he is saying, 'Your place.' "

So he was very particular about *ruci-pariksa*, or to examine the taste of a particular person for a particular lila and a particular group of service. It is necessary for the Acarya to examine his disciple and determine the place where he is to be located.

He must determine where his disciple stands and accordingly in harmony with that innate taste help him in his march towards that land of his aspiration.

The destination has been settled, but how shall I reach it? When shall I reach it? Those who come to my aid to take me there - they are my masters, my Gurus: Siksa-gurus and Diksa-guru. Whoever helps me to go there is my Guru. He is

my guide who will help me to reach my located destination, the station of my innermost hankering (*radhika-madhavasam prapto yasya prathitah krpaya sri-gurum tam nato 'smi*).

He has helped me to locate my destination; he has educated me how and what to aspire after, and how to reach that highest aspired shelter.

I have attained all these things through him. He is my all-in-all in life, the master of my life. There is a boat, and he is the helmsman (*guru-karnadharam*). I have surrendered unto him, I have accepted him. I have boarded his boat and he is taking me towards the goal of my life.

The human body (*nr-deham*) has been compared to a boat. By utilizing my resources in this body and mind, my Gurudeva, as the helmsman, is guiding me towards the goal. One who does not take this opportunity after coming into the human species commits suicide. He commits suicide by failing to take advantage of cross-ing the ocean of life and death, birth and death, birth and death. The very nature of the ocean of mundane existence is waves - life and death, birth and death.

The helmsman to take us across this ocean of life and death, birth and death, is Gurudeva. It is said in the Srimad-Bhagavatam that anyone who misses this chance is committing suicide:

nr-deham adyam sulabham sudurllabham

plavam sukalpam guru-karnadharam

mayanukulena nabhasvateritam

puman bhavabdhim na tares sa atmaha

(Bhagavatam, 11.20.17)

Here, the Lord is inferring, "So many boats are passing, and I am helping like a favorable wind. The helmsman is Guru, and I am the favorable wind. The boat is this human body, and you should all take this opportunity to cross the ocean of life, birth, and death. The world is compared to the infinite. It resembles infinity; it is very difficult to cross the ocean of life and death, birth and death. If you want to escape these troubles (*janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi-duhkha-*

dosanudarsanam), you must take the chance. Otherwise, you will lose so much that it amounts to suicide.

Mahaprabhu's grace presupposes some selection, whereas Nityananda's grace has no selection

The grace of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu presupposes some selection, but Sri Nityananda Prabhu's grace has no selection. He gives His grace to whoever He comes across. Nityananda Prabhu is so magnanimous that He saves whoever He comes across on His way. His mercy is so raw, indiscriminating, and broad. Nityananda Prabhu is most benevolent. Mahaprabhu has a sort of discrimination, but Nityananda Prabhu does not care for any discrimination whatsoever. Whether one is a fit or an unfit candidate, he is still counted as worthy. Such is His mercy.

Never dare to approach Sri Sri Radha and Krsna, neglecting the grace of Lord Nityananda (*hena nitai vine bhai, radha-krsna paite nai*). So, our revered Sripada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja laid stress on Nityananda Prabhu. Nityananda Prabhu is Lord Balarama. Nityananda Prabhu's grace is stressed for the fallen; His grace is real wealth for them because discrimination has hardly a place in it. Although not much, we nonetheless find some sort of discrimination in the magnanimity of Lord Gauranga. But Nityananda Prabhu is more generous. So first go to Nityananda Prabhu, and by His grace you will go to Mahaprabhu. And by the grace of Mahaprabhu you will easily reach Sri Sri Radha-Govinda in Vrndavana. This is the way shown to us.

yatha yatha gaura-padaravinde

vindeta bhaktim krta-punya-rasih

tatha tathotsarpati hrady akasmad

radha-padambhoja-sudhambu-rasih

(Sri Caitanya-candramrta 88)

"As devotion unto the lotus feet of Sri Gaurasundara is attained by a greatly pious person, unexpectedly the ocean of nectar which is the service of the lotus feet of Sri Radha is accordingly born within his heart."

Percolated by the mercy of Sri Gauranga, try to approach Srimati Radharani. Then there will no possibility of any dirt entering you and disturbing you in that plane. That will be percolated by Sri Gauranga.

If you have the shelter of Sri Gauranga you can be sure that you will very safely, smoothly, and intimately attain to the service of Srimati Radharani. Otherwise it is very dangerous, and sometimes suicidal. If you do not approach through Sri Gauranga the attempt will be reactionary. It is very dangerous to approach Sri Vrndavana and Srimati Radharani directly. You must approach commanded by Sri Gauranga. In other words, if you can appreciate the life of Sri Gauranga, the ideal of Sri Gauranga, then *kam* a (mundane desire), etc., will be exhaustively eliminated. You will be really purified to be acceptable to that domain of the highest lila.

So here, in Koladvipa, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave His best to all (*kuliya-gramete asi' sri-krsna-caitanya, hena nahi, ya 're prabhu na karila dhanya*). He gave the most desirable service, service of the sweetest type. Such service is found in Vrndavana, and Mahaprabhu Sri Caitanyadeva recommended Vrndavana life as the highest. Neither knowledge nor power can even approach this Vrndavana service. In Vrndavana, heart is every-thing. Sri Uddhava also said,

asam aho carana-renu-jusam aham syat,

vrndavane kim api gulma-latausadhinam

ya dustyajam svajanam arya-pathan ca hitva

bhejur mukunda-padavim srutibhir vimrgyam

(Bhagavatam, 10.47.61)

"Ignoring society and even scriptures, they (the Gopis) have given themselves up to the Absolute. They gave up their own relatives, and what is socially considered to be holy; they gave up everything for the cause of the service of the Lord." So Uddhava, the highest type of devotee, said, "I aspire after a birth as a blade of grass or some plant in Vrndavana, so that the feet-dust of the Gopis easily falls on my head."

So high is the position of the Gopis and Vrndavana. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu

recommended that very thing, with the added feature of distributing it to others. Giving it to others, one may have a wholesale dealing with a life so divine. All conceptions of *dharma* (duty), *adharma* (irreligion), *jnana* (knowledge, renunciation, liberation), etc. - they are very, very low in comparison to these affairs of Vrndavana.

Here, the heart is everything. Whoever has tenacity to follow this line has the greatest hope of success in life.

And again, *distya yad asin mat sneho, bhavatinam mad apanah* (Bhagavatam, 10.42.44): "It is supposed that one who gets My connection is fortunate, but I consider it My fortune that I got your (the Gopis') connection. Others say that anyone who gets My connection is fortunate. But I consider Myself fortunate because I have your connection. I am the most fortunate. It is My fortune that I have your connection, so it is sure that I shall be yours - I shall always be yours." Such things were spoken by Krsna when He met the Gopis at Kuruksetra. Such things are unattainable - people cannot even think so high, that such a life is possible. *Bhaktya sanjataya bhaktya* (Bhagavatam, 11.3.31): bhakti will produce more bhakti, and that bhakti will also produce more bhakti - in this way. Nothing else comes as a fruit. Bhakti is such a thing, it is its own reward.

yasyah kadapi vasanancala-khelanottha-

dhanyatidhanya-pavanena krtarthamani

yogindra-durgama-gatir madhusudano 'pi

tasyah namo 'stu vrsabhanubhuvodise 'pi

(Sri Prabodhananda Saraswatipada)

Here it has been told that once the flow of the wind had touched some part of the cloth or dress of Srimati Radharani; that wind touched Krsna's body, and Krsna was besides Himself with cheer, with gladness, with pleasure. "Oh! I felt a touch of the wind that blew past the dress of Radharani - I am so fortunate!" And who is that Krsna?

All the religious experts, scholars, yogis, etc., they are all hunting after Krsna's grace and that Krsna, He thinks Himself fortunate if He gets a little touch of the breeze that blew past the dress of Srimati Radharani.

So pure is Srimati Radharani. Her surrender, Her service, is so pure, that even a touch of that wind makes Krsna, Bhagavan, the Supreme Lord Himself, think that He has gained the highest fortune. He feels, "I am so fulfilled in My life." Srimati Radharani's position is first and foremost. Sri Jayadeva Goswami has written that Krsna wants the feet-dust of Srimati Radharani (*dehi pada-pallavam udaram*, Gita Govinda). However, ordinary people cannot understand this. Only the followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, by His grace, can understand anything of the substance of Radha-dasyam, the servitude of Srimati Radharani. So Radha-dasyam is the highest aspiration of the Gaudiya Vaisnava.

After Sri Caitanyadeva took sannyasa, He wandered throughout South India, and conquered the religious conceptions there. At Benares, Sri Svarupa Damodara also wanted to take sannyasa, but the function was half-done. When the Lord arrived at Puri, Sri Svarupa Damodara became as though mad, and with his sannyasa-function half-completed he ran to Puri. His name was Purusottama, and his brahmachari name was Svarupa Ananda. So, with this name still, he ran to Puri, like a madman, to see his guardian and friend, his everything. He greeted Sri Caitanyadeva with this sloka:

helodhunita-khedaya visadaya pranamilad amodaya

samyac-chastra-vivadaya rasadaya cittarpitonmadaya

sasvad-bhaktivinodaya samadaya madhurya-maryadaya

sri-caitanya-dayanidhe tava daya bhuyad amandodaya

(Sri Caitanyacandrodaya-nataka)

"O ocean of mercy, Sri Caitanya - that mercy which effortlessly dispels all lamentation; that mercy within which absolute purity resides; that mercy within which supreme ecstasy is revealed (overshadowing all else); that mercy which ends all scriptural debates by its appearance; that mercy which charms all directions by its pastimes of divine love - by its absolute sweetness may that all-expansive mercy of Yours, the bestower of all goodness, awaken in our hearts."

Sri Svarupa Damodara fell at the feet of Sri Caitanyadeva, with this sloka on his lips. "O great ocean of mercy, Sri Caitanyadeva, let Your grace be distributed to one and all. You are the ocean of grace let that grace be distributed to one and all. It is the grace which once begun never comes to end in any other wave; it

will never produce any bad thing thereafter. Your daya, Your mercy, is of such quality that if anyone gets a particle of it, then in no time that mercy will eliminate any bad position. Mando means Ôbad position,' so *amandodaya* is such *daya* that won't bring inauspiciousness at any time." Like a mad friend fallen at his feet, Sri Svarupa Damodara sang this sloka to Sri Caitanyadeva. In the line of instruction from Sri Caitanyadeva, Sri Svarupa Damodara is first, then Sri Rupa-Sanatana (*visvambhara priyankara, sri-svarupa-damodara, sri-goswami rupa-sanatana*). Sri Svarupa Damodara's position is such. In Vrndavana, his position is Lalita-sakhi. *Bhuyad* means *asirvada*, blessings; "I bestow my blessings to one and all; one and all may get the blessings of Sri Caitanyadeva."

A hint of the particular standard of Srimati Lalita Devi's service has been given by Srila Rupa Goswami:

radha-mukunda-pada-sambhava-gharmabindu--

nirmancanopakarane krta-deha-laksyam

When Lalita Devi finds a drop of perspiration at the feet of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, she furiously engages herself to remove it. "How has it come there? We are circumambulating Them to see that not the least pain can enter this domain to trouble Them. But how without our notice has this perspiration appeared? Perspiration, perspiration!" So she is furiously chastising herself, and wants to immediately take birth one lakh (100,000) times - with that force she comes to remove that drop of perspiration from the lotus feet of either of the Divine Couple.

If the least difficulty is seen in the serving area, the Lord's Associates can't tolerate it in any way, and such eagerness, self-abuse and earnestness is found in them. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said,

sanatana, deha-tyage krsna yadi paiye

koti-deha ksaneke tabe chadite pariye

(Chaitanya-charitamrita, Antya 4.56)

"O Sanatana, to attain the service of Krsna, I want to immediately die ten million times. I am ready to embrace ten million deaths if that will help me serve Him."

The *Hladini-sakti*, the feeling potency, is Srimati Radharani. Even She feels dissatisfaction within Herself; "I can't . . ." This holds the extreme position: "I can't do My service, My duty; I can't do it."

At the meeting in Syamanta-pancaka at Kuruksetra, Krsna Himself suddenly fell at Srimati Radharani's feet and begged forgiveness: "I am an offender, a criminal to your position. You are so self-giving, I cannot fulfill My real duty towards You. Your service to Me is so loving, I can't do My duty to You." But Srimati Radharani said, "It is I who am committing offenses, because I am still living despite Your separation. In Your separation I am still living - that proves that I am the offender. I am the offender, not You, because I am living. That is sufficient proof that I am not fit for You. Why did I not die with the separation? There is the proof."

Krsna fell at Her feet: "Your position is so high, so high. So long I was without You, increasing My different duties. Without trying to satisfy You, I engaged Myself in consideration of different duties."

But Srimati Radharani said, "No, no, it is I who am the offender, that I did not die without Your company. We find in the scriptures that the male has such freedom, but not the female. So I should have died in the separation, and You have no offense that You left Me to do so many duties here and there. You have so many duties to discharge, but I am only for Your service. As such, I could not keep up the standard."

Such was the meeting at Kuruksetra.

So in Krsna's pastimes, the potencies are *Sandhini*, *Samvit*, and *Hladini*. *Hladini* holds the highest position because of wholesale self-surrender. Next is *Samvit*, and then third is the position of the *Sandhini*. Thinking, feeling, and willing: willing is *Sandhini*, thinking is *Samvit*, and feeling is *Hladini*. Ordinarily we may think that feeling is the last of all, but no, it is the first. Feeling is first. Feeling, real feeling, has been given such a high position. We are all under feeling.

We are all searching, and feeling is commanding. We think feeling is the result. No. Feeling is commanding everything. First feeling, then thinking, then willing. Generally the *karmis* give the better hand to willing - willpower - all command; and the *jnanis* place everything in thinking - "We command the will, so we are

holding the high position." But feeling is at the basis of everything. He, or It, or She - is commanding everything. It has been told like that; we have to understand the position of feeling. Hare Krsna.

All glory to Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga

Pranati - dasakam

Ten Prayers unto the Holy Lotus Feet of

Om Astottara-sata-Sri- Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

Offered on His 94th Holy Day of Advent, 1988 composed by

The Present President-Acarya Om Visnupada Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj

Pranati-dasakam

naumi sri-gurupadabjam, yatirajesvaresvaram

sri-bhaktiraksakam srila-, sridhara-svaminam sada [1]

1. I eternally offer my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my Most Worshipful Divine Master, the Supreme Emperor of the

Sannyasi Kings - Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Swami.

sudirghonnata-diptangam, supibya-vapusam param

tridanda-tulasimala-, gopicandana-bhusitam [2]

acintya-pratibha-snigdham, divyajnana-prabhakaram

vedadi-sarvasastranam, samanjasya-vidhayakam [3]

g audiyacarya-ratnanam, ujjvalam ratnakaustubham

sri-caitanya-mahapremon-, mattalinam siromaniam [4]

2-4 He possesses a lofty, dignified, divinely effulgent, incomparable holy form, so charming to behold. Adorned with Gopicandana and a necklace of Tulasi beads, he holds the triple staff of the Vaisnava ascetics. Although he possesses the qualification of inconceivable potency, he is full of the utmost affection. All the ten directions are illuminated by the effulgence of his supramundane unalloyed perception. He is the dispenser of the genuine proper harmonious adjustment of all the scriptures - the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Upanisads, the Puranas, etc. headed by the Srimad-Bhagavata-Purana (Srimad-Bhagavatam) which holds equal importance with the Vedas.

In the necklace of the jewels of Acaryas in the Sri Gaudiya Sampradaya he shines resplendently like the brilliant Kaustubha gem, and he is radiant in his glory as the Crown-jewel of the bumblebee-devotees who are mad in the Supreme Lord Sri Caitanya Maha- prabhu's love supreme. I eternally offer my obeisances unto him, my Most Worshipful Divine Master.

gayatri-artha-viniryasam, gita-gudhartha-gauravam

stotraratnadi-samrddham, prapannajivanamrtam [5]

apurvagrantha-sambharam, bhaktanam hrd-rasayanam

krpaya yena dattam tam, naumi karunya-sundaram [6]

5-6 By his grace, he brought to full bloom the deepest underlying purport of Gayatri, the Mother of the Vedas; by his grace he opened the hidden treasure-house of the glorious internal purport of Srimad Bhaga-vad-gita - and he distributed these gifts to one and all, even the lowest of the low. He revealed the supreme holy book (Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam, which is a treasure of many types of precious gems of holy stanzas (the wealth of holy stanzas compiled from Stotra-ratna by Sri Yamunacarya and many other valuable sources) sung by the Lord and His devotees; he revealed an unprecedented collection of holy books (Search for Sri Krsna - Reality the Beautiful, Sri Guru and His Grace, The Golden Volcano of Divine Love, etc.) that are the very life-nectar for the devotee's hearts and spiritual senses - he gave these gifts to the world. I eternally offer my obeisances unto him, my Most Worshipful Divine Master, the beautiful Deity of mercy incarnate.

sankirtana-maharasasabdhes candramanibham

sambhati vitaran visve gaura-krsnam ganaih saha [7]

7 He revels in his full-blown splendor as along with and through his intimate servitors he distributes in the entire universe the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Gaura-Krsna, the moon risen from the nectar ocean of the Grand Dance of the congregational chanting of Sri Krsna's holy name.

dhamani sri-navadvipe, guptagovardhane subhe

visvavisruta-caitanya-, sarasvata-mathottamam [8]

sthapayitva gurun gaura-, radha-govindavigrahan

prakasayati catmanam, seva-samsiddhi-vigraha [9]

gaura-srirupa-siddhanta-, divya-dharadharam gurum

sri-bhakti-raksakam devam, sridharam pranamamy aham [10]

8-10 In Sri Navadvipa Dhama, which is nondifferent from the holy abode of Sri Vrndavana, His Divine Grace established the world-renowned Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math at Sri Koladvipa, the selfsame 'Hidden Govardhana Hill' (Gupta-Govardhana), which is the sacred place where all offenses are absolved (*Aparadha-bhanjana-pata*).

There, he revealed the beautiful devotional service of the Worshipful Deities Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga-Gandharva-Govindasundara, divinely manifesting his very self as the Deity of service in perfection.

Eternally do I offer my obeisances unto the holy lotus feet of my Divine Master Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj who carries the divine current of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati coming in the line of Sri Rupa, the object of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu's divine affection.

sraddhaya yah pathen nityam, pranati-dasakam muda

visate ragamargesu, tasya bhakta-prasadatah

dinadhamasya tridandibhiksu-sri-bhakti-sundara-govindasya

One who with pure faith happily sings this *Pranati-dasakam* every day, gains the qualification to serve the Supreme Lord on the path of spontaneous love (*Raga-marga*), by the grace of the associate-servitors of that Srila Gurudeva.

Epilogue

His Divine Grace Sri Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj was born in 1894 in a highly respected Brahmana family of the Bhattacharya order, at Hapaniya, District Burdwan, West Bengal.

He received his education at Baharampur University. Having taken his pious birth in Sri Gauda-mandala, the holy lands where Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu exhibited His divine pastimes on the earth, Srila Sridhar Maharaj from his very childhood, had natural affinity for the mission of Sri Caitanyadeva - Sankirtana, the Grand Congregational Chanting of the Holy Names of the Supreme Lord.

In 1926, Srila Sridhar Maharaj joined the Sri Gaudiya Math, and became an initiated disciple of its founder, the illustrious Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Goswami Prabhupada (1874-1937). He later accepted the holy order of sannyasa (monkhood) in 1930.

Recognizing him as a faithful stalwart preacher of the perfect precepts of Gaudiya Vaisnavism, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada conferred upon him the name 'Sri Bhakti Raksaka', meaning,

'Guardian of Devotion'; and further, echoing the statement of the great Vaisnava Preceptor Srila Jiva Goswami (who referred in his Sanskrit writings to the renowned Srimad-Bhagavatam commentator, Sri Sridhara Swamipada, as *bhakti-eka-raksaka*, 'Supreme Guardian of Devotion'), Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada gave him the Tridanda-sannyasa title of Sridhara.' Thus, he became Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj. As a prominent preacher in the Sri Gaudiya Math mission, he traveled extensively throughout India and preached fluently in Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, and English, spreading the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu on mass levels in universities, public seminars and Sankirtana festivals.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada also expressed high appreciation for Srila Sridhar Maharaj's Sanskrit composition 'Sri Bhaktivinoda *Viraha-dasakam*,' considering it an omen of assurance that the grand ideals and dignity of the Sri Gaudiya Divine Succession (*Sampradaya*) would be perfectly upheld

and preached by such a learned and sensitive devotee as Srila Sridhar Maharaj. And practically, as a testimony to this fact, just prior to Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada's departure from this mortal world, Srila Prabhupada had Srila Sridhar Maharaj sing in his presence the holy prayer most venerated by the entire Sri Gaudiya Vaisnava community - *Sri Rupa-manjari-pada, sei mora sampada*.

After the passing of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura Goswami Prabhupada, Srila Sridhar Maharaj's Godbrothers, associates, and the public, naturally revered him as the seniormost representative of the Sri Gaudiya Sampradaya, although Srila Sridhar Maharaj himself was more inclined to anonymity as a humble Vaisnava. Nonetheless, by the call of divine duty and divine inspiration, he established the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math at Sri Nabadwip Dham, hinting in a short Sanskrit poem that the Math - as a sanctuary where the holy message of his Gurudeva, Sri Rupa, and Sri Caitanyadeva was preached - would inevitably become renowned throughout the world amongst the sincere and pious seekers of unalloyed truth and divinity.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj is the composer of numerous classical prayers and commentaries in Sanskrit and Bengali. His works are hailed as gems of pure Vaisnavism by scholars, philosophers, and devotees world-wide. He authored Sri Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam, a Sanskrit devotional treatise on the subject of divine surrender, which has become a standard text-book for devotees every-where.

Upon reaching his eighties, not only Indians but persons from America, Europe, and the world over, became attracted by his teachings and personality. He was known as a pure saint of the most simple habits of living. He was respected and loved for his saintly simplicity, his affectionate nature and dealings; and he was revered by all, whether Godbrothers, disciples, other devotees, or the general public, being unanimously venerated for his formidable encyclopedic command of the revealed scriptures, and further for his unique and unprecedented style of casting newer and newer light upon the most internal philosophical and revelatory purports of pure Sri Gaudiya-Vaisnava-Siddhanta.

A vast library of his taped discourses has been compiled by his disciples, and from such recordings have been published the exquisite English books "Search for Sri Krsna - Reality the Beautiful," "Sri Guru and His Grace," "The Golden Volcano of Divine Love," "Loving Search for the Lost Servant," as well as his unique commentary and interpretation of Srimad Bhagavad-gita, "The Hidden

Treasure of the Sweet Absolute," and many others. Many more publications are also anticipated.

On 12th August, 1988, His Divine Grace Sri Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj departed from this world, to enter into the eternal pastimes. His departure did not herald the departure of one of the great stars of the Sri Gaudiya firmament, but that of the moon itself. Even the earth herself trembled on two occasions, forecasting and punctuating the event. A divine temple, named "The Temple of Union in Separation," will be erected at his holy shrine at Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Nabadwip, and worship will continue throughout the generations.



Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume Two

Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj

All Glory to the Divine Master and the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna Chaitanya

Chapter 1 Invite Vasudeva to the Throne of Your Heart

Devotee: What should a devotee do when he is continually being attacked by lust, anger and greed?

Srila Guru Maharaj: One should cry for the help of the *sadhu*; the *sadhus* are posted from above. There are many who are progressing from the mundane world to the spiritual world, and special *sadhus* are given charge to protect those travelers. So the devotee will cry aloud: "I am going to be plundered! Give me protection!" With fervor, he will move all his nerve to the extreme: "I must not allow myself to be plundered by you! All my previous tendencies have shaped my fate, and now they have appeared; I am prey to all those nasty plunderers - please protect me! *Kama*, *krodha* and *lobha* (lust, anger and greed) are jumping at me!"

There are also so many artificial methods:

yamadibhir yogapathaih kama-lobha-hato muhuh

mukunda-sevaya yadvat tathaddhatma na samyati

(Bhagavatam, 1.6.35)

The practices of sitting postures (*asanas*) , breath control (*pranayama*) ,

etc., may help us to a slight degree, but only superficially. The deep seed can be eliminated only by taking Mukunda on the throne of our heart.

(*Mukunda sevaya yadvat tathaddhatma na samyati*) . If one goes on with the artificial means of *pranayama* and so on, lust and anger may seem to be a little reduced in power for the time being, but this is not a permanent cure. When the practices are slackened, they arise again. The relief from lust, anger and greed is only temporary.

The meditators and renouncers (*yogis*, *jnanis*) think these practices will quench their inner thirst, and they go on with constant deep meditation (*nidhidhyasanam*) while keeping guard outwardly with some external practices. But the devotees do not have any faith in this method. They consider the whole thing artificial. They only want to invite Vasudeva in all phases of their lives, and in this way they permanently do away with those enemies.

Devotee: Maharaj, in the beginning we're taught to follow. But it seems there is a point where we imitate, and then follow later. Because we have no qualification, when we try to follow we are actually imitating somehow. So what's the difference between the two? When does imitation or *anukarana* become following or *anuserana*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In *anuserana* , following, there is sincerity; and *anukarana*, imitation, is only for name and fame, or *pratistha* . To only imitate devotion outwardly without inner purity is more or less done to get the glory of a *sadhu* . And *anuserana* means to attain from the heart, sincerely. So true following is sincere progress, and imitation is artificiality.

It has been practically experienced that responsible services can help us from falling prey to lust, anger, etc. Foremost is faith (*sraddha*) , next is the association of pure devotees (*sadhu-sanga*) and deep engagement with the duties prescribed by the Divine Master (*bhajana-kriya*) . Deep engagement is necessary, especially for the mind, not merely the body.

And mental engagement can be attained only by responsibility. Some responsible service is given to the disciple. He feels weight and it occupies his brain; he cannot but think about it - the mind is engaged there, surely. So the mind gets no chance to dwell on lower things. This is the beauty of deep engagement in responsible Service. In the practical sense, that helps us a great deal. Then association and Scriptures will really be of substantial help to us: as Service (*pariprasna, sevaya*) . As much as we are able to engage ourselves in deep, responsible services, the enemies' effect on us will be minimized. They will come and peep, and will step back saying, "No - no time. He is deeply engaged. He has no time to give attention to us. He may not be enticed." In this way, they will have to retreat. Then if they return once, twice, thrice or more - "Oh, no time. He has no attention to spare for us. He is very deeply engaged - for *Seva* ."

Seva, Service, should not be merely physical; there is mental *Seva* , and only responsibility can capture the mind. In responsibility, the mind is compelled to think on the matter; otherwise, the mind may be free to wander hither and thither even while the body is apparently engaged. So engage the mind in deep Service, responsible Service.

Chapter 2 The Eye to See the Dhama - The Eye of Faith

In an ordinary country there is a capital. The capital is where the existence and position of the king is more intense than in the general section of the country. Similarly, the Lord is everywhere, and His concentrated existence is found in the *Dhama* or the Holy Abode. With fully developed vision, we can feel the special characteristic of the *Dhama*. We shall find His presence everywhere, but with particular intensity in the *Dhama*. With the awakening of our real eye, we should be able to feel and appreciate according to this criterion. There is no question of a *Dhama* for those who have no eye to see. There is also a hierarchy in the *Dhama*. All are in serving attitude whether birds, beasts, worms, insects - everything - all are contributing to the Reality. Their feeling of heart, their gesture, posture or movement - everything contributes exclusively to the Pastimes of the Lord.

Dhamera svarupa , sphuribe nayane : in one song, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura aspires for that pure vision of the *Dhama*. Otherwise, it may appear quite ordinary to us, like a jungle. The purity of Ganges water is only perceived by those who have proper faith or *sraddha* . Otherwise to others eyes it is ordinary water. The same applies to the Deity, or *Sri Murti*. One may think that the *Sri Murti* of Lord Jagannatha in Puri appears to be a somewhat awkward figure. His arms seem incomplete, His feet are not visible, His eyes are enormous. Yet Mahaprabhu stood before Him for hours, shedding tears. No one could move Him from that place. What did Mahaprabhu see in that Figure, and what is He to our eyes? So according to the depth of vision of our inner eye we can come to that plane of the *Dhama*, the Deity, and the purifying Ganges water.

Sraddhamayo 'yam purusah (Bhagavad-gita, 17.3): "The nature of a person is modeled on faith." Of what value is a mirror without an eye? In a looking-glass we should find the reflection, but if the eye is absent, what will the subject see in the glass? So the eye to see - faith - is necessary. According to the *sraddha*, the specific character of the *Dhama* as distinct from all other places will come into view, disclosing its real form. Everything depends on *sraddha*, faith.

Faith is the only effective link. If we wish to have any link with the sun or the moon, ordinary instruments won't do, but some plenary medium like electricity, etc., can help to connect us. We must approach via a plane similar to the object. Similarly, we can approach the infinite only with the help of *sraddha*. We cannot hope to have any connection with that finest plane of fundamental existence of this world with the help of the eye, nose or ear, or even by intelligence or reason. If we want to have any connection with the finest plane that is underlying this creation, it is possible only through faith (*sraddhamayo 'yam purusah*).

Then, the question of credibility arises: faith may be blind. But as long as the qualification of 'blind' faith exists, 'seeing' faith must also be possible! Blind faith is diseased faith, but we must connect by real or healthy faith. Then again, our experience must be confined to our own limitations; so how much faith can we accumulate?

Infinite faith in the Infinite

When we try to establish a connection with the infinite, there are infinite possibilities. But how much faith can finite things like us have? How much can we imagine? Imagination must also have a limit, yet the infinite exists, beyond even the limit of any imagination. The infinite is so spacious and broad that even our imagination fails. How much can we imagine? We are born and bred in a cell; our experience is limited and our imagination is also limited. So imagination cannot be extended to take on an infinite character. We must be conscious that we are going to establish our relationship with the infinite, where the greatest imagination is only a point. Imagination cannot devour the infinite, so imagination must not be allowed to obstruct us. How much can we imagine? Something very meager in comparison with the infinite. We must not allow ourselves to be slaves to our imagination. The infinite is so broad, we cannot have any conception of it, we cannot imagine it. It is beyond. So we must not cower under blind faith - there may exist infinitely more than we can imagine. Only genuine faith can help us in that direction, toward the infinite. And even when we have some conception, it is said that the key to make Himself known to us is in His hand. When He opens the door, we can enter. The key is not within our hand. We can see only as much as He likes us to. He is *Adhoksaja* - Transcendental. We first have to accept this before we can approach Him or even expect to know Him. We must prepare ourselves with this attitude of accepting Him as *Adhoksaja* .

If He does not allow us to enter into His Domain, should we deny His existence? He is free to do as He pleases; what can He lose? It is we who are the losers. So we should submissively acknowledge the *Adhoksaja* Realm above us. Superseding Sankaracarya's philosophy, Sri Ramanuja introduced this *Adhoksaja* principle.

The Supersubjective Realm

Because we cannot enter that realm as a subject or making it an object of our investigation, we deny the existence of such a thing. What does this mean? Fools may be satisfied with such an imaginary tendency, but really there is such a Domain, and when He wants to take us within His jurisdiction we can have some experience of it. This is *Adhoksaja* .

Srimad-Bhagavatam warns us with this expression, *Adhoksaja*. He is *Adhoksaja* - Transcendental, Supramental. We cannot enter that domain as a subject. Even if we approach Him as investigators, we can know Him only as much as He allows us to. Still, we have to admit that there is such a realm, the Supersubjective Realm. We are subject, and that is Supersubject. The *jiva-caitanya*, the soul, is not the final existence.

Socrates said that the soul is immortal, and can live independent of matter. He realized that the soul is a unit independent of matter - it is not a product of matter. Yet, the soul is not the final substance. Compared to matter, the soul is spiritual, but at the same time he may be considered like matter in comparison to his Knower, the Supersoul, *Paramatman* , and so on. The subjective realm progresses onward, more and more.

There, all are our masters. We cannot be master there, we can only be servants. If we want to enter into the highest position, we shall accept the position of the slave of the slave. Only then can we get the chance of entering into that Domain. It is not unreasonable.

Some may think that matter, gas, sky, and finally ether is the limit of existence; or, beyond ether, electricity is the limit. But beyond that is the soul, as Socrates said. There, soul is existence, transcending matter in all its phases. So, also, that soul is only a particle on the gross side of the Absolute. There is finer existence as Supersoul, and onwards. Just as in the material creation there are so many stages such as earth or stone, wood, gold, etc., there is similarly a gradation in

spiritual substance. Generally, two - in the lower part Vaikuntha, and the highest sphere is Goloka or the Land of Love.

The Play of the Sweet Absolute

The spiritual existence may also be divided into three basic classes: *sat*, *cit*, *anandam*. Above the subjective existence of *cetana* or *cit*, the *jiva* - soul, there is a higher fundamental, categorically different element of *anandam*, or happiness, ecstasy. That is not only *cit*, not only subjective, but fulfillment of the subject as *anandam*, full in itself, or more specifically in Himself. And this is the main element to be found in Goloka. Knowledge is rather subservient there. Knowledge - *jnana*, *anubhuti* - perception, experience, even of the transcendental, is subservient, subdued, and the automatic flow of *anandam* - beauty and harmony - is the real characteristic of the Goloka section. *Jnana* does not play any part there (*jnana-sunya-bhakti*). It is something like intuition.

The movement there is intuitive, and full of ecstasy. There is no movement by calculation; it is all by intuition (*sambandha-jnana*). How and wherefrom the direction comes, they do not care to know. They are but instruments in the hands of that *Anandamaya-vilasa* or Ecstatic Play.

This is Goloka, and we are told that if we have faith, we shall take the trouble of making a journey toward that plane. Faith should be the guide, impelled by our intense desire (*lobha*, *laulyam*). Our attraction and feeling of necessity for it takes precedence: "Yes, I want that." Then, we begin. Just as Hegel said, 'the idea precedes the action.' So, in *sraddha*, we feel, "Yes, I want that thing." Then we shall take the trouble of approaching it. So we are told that the highest position is such, that is, intuitive labor of Love in the Divine Pastimes (*Vilasa*). And that is the conception of the highest quarter, where one can find the best happiness, or ecstasy. One who has attraction for that will take the trouble of accepting it and going to that place; that is given by *Bhagavatam* and Mahaprabhu.

The Land of Beauty

Satyam is the land of the conception of existence; *sivam* is the land of good; and *sundaram* is the land of beauty. *Jivam* means *mangalam*, that is, that which is safe from mortality - unassailable existence. There is existence in mortality - the material energy also exists. But there is a land where there is no death, and that

is considered to be *sivam* or *mangalam*.

And *sundaram* is the positive life of attraction. One aspires to live such a life. *Sundaram* is a life worth living. There is such a land in the highest quarter. Mahaprabhu and *Bhagavatam* called us for that: "Here is a soil, and you are a child of that soil. If you analyze yourself deeply, you will find that you are a child of that soil. You are not created for this land where you are always suffering from uncertainty and apprehension.

Apprehension and uncertainty are always troubling you; you must cross beyond them, go up, and you will find *sivam* - no apprehension, but the positive life. If you really like to have it, you will have to enter into the area of Goloka, the land of beauty and love. No consideration of calculation, no necessity of calculation or anything else. There, no fraud or deception can ever be dreamed of, so calculation and reasoning have no place at all. Automatically, all is good, all is fulfillment. It is the general conception.

Then, for satisfaction's sake, *Yogamaya* has designed things in such a way that Krsna's Associates are afraid of losing Him, and Krsna also misses Srimati Radharani, or Mother Yasoda, etc. This is designed to maintain the Pastimes there, and not out of necessity. It is not out of necessity, but it is the way of life: as a fashion it is maintained, and not for want.

aher iva gatih premnah svabhava-kutila bhavet

ato hetor ahetos ca, yunor mana udancati

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 8.110)

"The nature of Love is curved like a snake; therefore two kinds of quarrelsome pride arise between Lover and Beloved: justified and groundless."

Srila Rupa Goswami gives this example. By nature, the serpent goes by a zigzag or curved movement. So, in the land of *Prema* (Divine Love), *mana*, *abhimana* (lover's quarrel, ego) and so on, are all in the nature of dealings there, but not out of necessity or want. That is the way of *Vilasa*, or Pastimes.

Devotee: On Srimati Lalita Devi's Appearance Day, you were saying how Lalita Devi goes out to the streets of Vrndavana, with a pen and paper -

Srila Guru Maharaj: - canvassing right and left, "Come and join my camp! I shall give you Engagement in the Service of Radha and Govinda." And that is infinite.

Devotee: So Maharaj, can one who is aspiring for Devotional Service identify himself with the thought of becoming enrolled in that particular camp?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course, otherwise why does that exist? That is the Infinite. There's no rule of limitation that says all the vacancies are filled. It is not finite.

Devotee: But whether it is audacity -

Srila Guru Maharaj: Audacity, impertinence -

Devotee: Yes - to go and ask to be engaged in *Madhura-lila*, Divine Pastimes in Consortship?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It will be unavoidable. Necessity does not care for anything. There is no loss in necessity. When anyone finds the aspiration in himself, he will helplessly or unconsciously appeal, "Please enlist my name." He can't resist.

Devotee: This question was troubling me very much. It is inconceivable how the great Associates of the Lord actually want to take others to such Engagement.

Srila Guru Maharaj: There's no dearth of facility on that side.

Mahaprabhu says,

tuya daya aichena parama udara

atisaya manda natha bhaga hamara

"Whatever may be lacking is on my part. There is no defect on Your side." The *Acarya* Thakura Bhaktivinoda has given us this interpretation.

namnam-akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis

tatrapita niyamitah smarane na kalah

etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi

durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah

"O Lord, Your Holy Name bestows all good fortune unto the soul, and thus you have extended into the world Your many Names - Krsna, Govinda, etc. You have offered all Your Transcendental Potency in Your Holy Name, without enjoining any (scriptural or philosophical) hard and fast rules and regulations concerning time, place or circumstance to be observed in chanting it. Dear Lord, You have so graciously made Your Holy Name available to the ordinary souls, and yet my misfortune, my offensiveness, does not allow Love for that gracious Name to be born in my heart."

Therefore Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "I don't find any taste for You in my heart - it is hard like rock. There is unlimited grace on Your side, but I am so mean, so low, and You are so High."

Overwhelming Grace - the birth of fortune

But this feeling cannot arise without being in the relativity of that Superior World. Without that, such thoughts cannot arise. When really in the relativity of that world, the thought of overwhelming grace also arises. One feels that grace, although he feels unqualified in himself. And that is the beginning. Fortune begins there. Necessity is the mother of invention. *Sraddha* has come, showing such a great prospect to the devotee, and he is very eager to attain that prospect - but he fails. That failure is also in one sense participating in a particular position. He's already in the relativity of the Infinite, otherwise he could not have made such a statement. It is infinite! Whatever degree of attainment he may reach, he'll still be unsatisfied - because that is infinite. *Na prema-gandho 'sti darapi me harau*: "Is there such an attainment in me? No. I do not possess it, because it is impossible to possess Him." Yet, possession is there in the negative sense: "I am so negative."

This is the nature of the Negative's possession of the Positive, and so, She can attract the Positive. The more the negative characteristic is found in a particular place, the more the positive is attracted there. That is the underlying truth.

Srimati Radharani says, "I am in the highest need of Krsna." So much feeling of necessity in Krsna's absence is not to be found anywhere as in Her heart. And that satisfies Krsna. Setting aside all other demands, He wants to come and

satisfy the demand of that heart where want for Him is of the highest degree. Is it not natural? Dedication. We are units or aspects of the Moiety of Dedication, and not of fulfillment. Fulfillment is a stagnant thing. It is a qualification in the limited world. But in the unlimited, such an attitude can't stand. This is the nature there. *Ksudha* .

Devotee: Ksudha means unquenchable thirst?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes; unquenchable thirst, so the tiniest drop of nectar will be tasted as very, very sweet. Inundating. Once in Madras, one gentleman put a question to me: "Your highest ideal is Chaitanyadev? Isn't His conception dangerous? Always mad with want of something, crying and rubbing His face against the wall, such intense madness for want of Krsna - that is a dangerous thing to us! We would be rather afraid to make that the ideal for our life."

bahye visa-jvala haya, bhitare anandamaya

krsna-premera adbhuta carita

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 2.50)

"The amazing characteristic of Love for Krsna is found in the symptoms of burning anguish without, and ecstasy within."

The Joy of hankering for the Truth

Extreme hankering for the truth is in itself *anandam*. "I want only the truth, nothing else" - that is *anandam*. It is unpossessed by any unessential thing. And by nature, the highest fulfillment is found in the negative aspect; the intense feeling of negativity is the highest attainment in its fullest position. Fulfillment of life is in the necessity of the Negative Potency.

Devotee: Maharaj, does that negativity mean humility?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, it begins from humility. As Sri Chaitanyadev has taught us, one should consider himself lower than a straw and be more tolerant than a tree, and never expect honor for oneself, but always offer it to others.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has explained that we are actually lower than a straw because in our present existence we are *vikrta*, or deranged. But a straw is at

least passive and maintaining its natural position. We have lost our proper function and become of negative value; we are lacking the positive value of a straw because we are adverse.

We are going against our own interest with our intelligence. We have intelligence, but it is misguided, opposed to the proper order of things.

The straw is poised, it cannot move, but we can move in a wrong way. So we are actually in a more heinous position than a straw. We use our assets willingly to misguide ourselves, but the straw maintains its fixed position without deviation.

In the worldly sense we may hold a position superior to that of grass or a tree, but what of that? All our credits are being misused for our selfishness. So we are lower than straw. We are armed, but armed for suicide. A madman should not possess a dagger. He is dangerous. He could stab himself at any moment - he's mad.

The tolerance of the tree may also be seen in the same light. The tree must forbear his former actions, but we must be alert not only to the former but also to the present actions. In the present time also we may commit some wrong, so our position is more dangerous than a tree's. The tree is only reaping the result of its previous action, but our need is to guard ourselves against our present malactivity, so we require more forbearance than that of a tree. We should think, "I must be more cautious than the tree in my attitude of forbearance. My position is more dangerous because my special attainment is going against me."

Chapter 3 Bhajana Real and Apparent

Devotee: I have heard that some *Acaryas* hold that *smarana* , internal remembrance, is of prime importance as a devotional service to the Lord, above even *kirtana* or chanting; or is it subservient to *kirtana*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There are some who are of that opinion because *smarana* is exclusively connected with consciousness, or more concerned with the subtle part of our existence; so that should be the most effective form of *sadhana* , or means to the end. But our Guru Maharaj, and Srila Jiva Goswami, and also Kaviraja Goswami Prabhu, laid stress on *kirtana* - especially for the beginners. Guru Maharaj says in his song *Vaisnava ke?* ('Who is a Vaisnava?'):

kirtana prabhava, smarana haibe, se kale bhajana nirjjana sambhava

"Internal remembrance can occur by the power of *kirtana*, and only then is solitary Service possible." *Nirjjana-bhajana* or *smarana*, exclusive solitary Devotion unconscious of the environment is not at all possible for beginners. And Srila Jiva Goswami says (*Bhakti-sandarbha*, *sankhya* 273):

yadyapy anya bhaktih kalau karttavya,

tada kirtanakhya-bhakti-samyogenaiva.

"In this Kali-yuga, of the nine basic forms of Devotional Practices, the forms other than *kirtana* certainly should be practiced, but they must be conducted subserviently to *kirtana* ." And this is the principle of Mahaprabhu's preaching. *Kirtana* has its own special characteristic, particularly in Kali-yuga.

kaler dosa-nidhe rajann asti hy eko mahan gunah

kirtanad eva krsnasya mukta-sangah param vrajet

(Bhagavatam, 12.3.51)

(Sri Sukadeva Goswami said) "O King, the age of Kali, the repository of all evils, has but one glorious characteristic: in this age, those who simply chant the Holy Name of Krsna are liberated and reach the Supreme Lord."

Also, Srila Madhvacarya has written in his commentary on *Mundakopanisad*:

dvapariyair janair visnuh pancaratraais ca kevalam

kalau tu nama-matrena pujiyate bhagavan harih

"In Dvapara-yuga, Lord Visnu is exclusively worshiped by the people according to the principles of Deity worship delineated in the *Pancaratra* Scripture, but in Kali-yuga, the Supreme Lord Hari is worshiped only by the chanting of His Holy Name."

In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* , when the incarnation of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is mentioned (Bhagavatam, 11.5.32), the method by which the people will worship Him is also given:

yajnaih sankirtana-prayair yajanti hi sumedhasah

Here, *yajnah* means sacrifice, dedication, which is *sankirtana-praya* , or *sankirtana-pradhana* , which means 'predominated by *sankirtana* , the congregational chanting of the Holy Name'; and this is performed by those endowed with sufficient piety. So, in this age of Iron, *kirtana* has its own special privilege, granted by the Supreme Lord - Mahaprabhu's speciality is preaching, *kirtana* . He inaugurated and conducted *Hari-kirtana*.

So *kirtana* has been accepted by our Guru Maharaj, Srila Jiva Goswami, and others. To write about the Lord is also within the jurisdiction of *kirtana* To preach is assertion - to take the message to others.

So also, to be engaged in answering the questions of the environment automatically demands concentration, which is very rare in this age.

When one is doing *kirtana*, he automatically cannot but give all concentration and attention. He cannot speak independently; intuitively, he must be all-attentive. For this reason, *kirtana* has been recommended to be the highest form of *bhajana* , especially in the age of Kali.

bhajanera madhye srestha nava-vidha bhakti

'krsna-prema,'krsna' dite dhare maha-sakti

tara madhye sarva-srestha nama-sankirtana

niraparadhe nama laile paya prema-dhana

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Antya 4.70,71)

"Of all forms of Divine Service, nine forms are superior, which with great potency bestow upon the devotees Love for Krsna, and their personal relationship with Him; and of the nine, the best is *Nama-sankirtana* . By offenselessly taking the Holy Name, the treasure of Love for the Lord is attained."

Mahaprabhu also accepted five principal limbs from the nine that are mentioned in the *Bhagavatam* as *sravanam* , *kirtanam* , etc.:

sadhu-sanga, nama-kirtana, bhagavat-sravana

mathura-vasa, sri-murtira sraddhaya sevana

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 22.124)

"Association with the pure devotee, chanting the Holy Name, hearing the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* , residing in Mathura Dhama, and faithfully worshiping the Deity."

So of these five, Mahaprabhu has given *Nama-sankirtana* the highest position. *Nama-sankirtana* has been considered best of all. It has been delineated by the *Acaryas*. That was especially given by our Guru Maharaj, and the basis is supported by the *sastra*, Scriptures. But if other *Acaryas* have shown preference for *smarana* in any instance, that will be in the sense that *kirtana* may be in the relativity of the material environment, whereas *smarana* is independent of the material consideration. From that point of view, *smarana* may be recommended as the highest, but that is not accepted in a general way. It may be a special opinion.

In *Caitanya-siksamrita* , Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has clarified that there are two types of devotees in the stage just prior to attaining the highest plane of *Paramahansa* or *uttamadhikara* . The devotees who cross the middle stage (*madhyamadhikara*) and reach towards occupying the highest position are called devotees in the stage of *premaruruksu* .

They are classified in two sections - *gosthyanandi* and *viviktanandi* (or *bhajanandi*). The first are always engaged in preaching, and the second take to *smarana* or *nirjjana-bhajana* - a solitary life of worship, without mixing with the environment. It does not prove that one is superior to the other. The *viviktanandis* generally like secluded life and go on with *smarana* ; and those who are of the *gosthyanandi* type go on with *kirtana* , preaching, and also attain the highest position without coming to the school of exclusive *smarana* . Those who have attained the highest plane are known as *premarudha*.

Imaginary perfection - self-deception

Guru Maharaj clearly said that when we are in a lower position, *smarana* is injurious. Rather, we should take to *kirtana* . *Kirtana prabhava, smarana haibe, se kale bhajana nirjjana sambhava* . The Sahajiya school (imitationists) are

more fond of *smarana* than *kirtana*. They are 'followers' of *smarana*. They lead a secluded life, and mentally they go on identifying themselves with a particular *sakhi* of their own age, her duty, her place of attendance in a particular place of Vrndavana, in a particular *lila* , under the guidance of a particular *sakhi* , and so on. They are required to go on meditating on all these things by their so-called *guru*. That is the process amongst the Sahajiya school, but we do not admit that. We consider it all false and imaginary. They are not fit for the plane. They do not have real *sambandha-jnana*, knowledge of what is what. They only go on with the habitual repetition of a particular mental speculation, but *anartha-nivrtti* (purging of evils) or any other process based on it cannot be effected thereby. Their imagined achievement is sheer concoction. They are not aware of the facts - the ontological gradation from Viraja to Brahmaloka, Vaikuntha and Goloka. They are *pukura-curiwale* - 'pond thieves.' To think one can steal a pond is self-deception. We think that kind of ' *smarana* ' to be something like self-deception.

For example, Srila Gaura Kisora Babaji Maharaj went on with *smarana*. Once, there was another Babaji who constructed a *kutir* nearby, a small hut, and he went on imitating Gaura Kisora Babaji, doing *madhukari* (subsisting on alms), sitting and meditating, and wearing similar cloth.

Then once Babaji remarked, "If a lady enters into a maternity ward, she cannot produce a child only by imitating the sounds and symptoms of labor. Many things are necessary before that!" So only by imitating the *Paramahansa Babaji*, *bhajana* cannot be effected. One must have connection with *suddha-sattva* , the real plane, and then all the higher symptoms may appear. Otherwise, all those speculative antics will manifest.

na uthiya vrksopari, tanatani phala dhari'

dusta-phala karile arjjana

(Kalyana-kalpataru, Upadesa 18)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that if one wants fruits without taking the trouble to climb the tree, what sort of fruits can he expect? The fruits will be ruined, or rotten. Without proper progression, it is all imagination - a madman's feat. One must gradually reach the plane of truth, *suddha-sattva*. There are so many planes to cross - Bhur-, Bhuvar-, Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, Satya-loka, Viraja, Brahmaloka. Mahaprabhu says that the creeper of Bhakti grows and rises

up to Goloka, and she has to cross all these planes.

upajiya bade late 'brahmanda' bhedi' yaya

'viraja,' 'brahmaloka,' bhedi''paravyoma' paya

tabe yaya tad upari 'goloka-vrndavana'

'krsna-carana'-kalpavrkse kare arohana

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 19.153,4)

"The creeper of Devotion is born, and grows to pierce the wall of the universe. It crosses the Viraja river and the *Brahman* plane, and reaches to the Vaikuntha plane. Then it grows further up to Goloka Vrndavana, finally reaching to embrace the wish-yielding tree of Krsna's Lotus Feet."

But the pseudo-devotees do not care to know what is Paravyoma, what is Brahmaloka, what is Viraja, what is the *Brahmanda*. Without caring to know about these things, they approach any *guru*, receive some *mantram*, and go on meditating. But in such a stage, if one goes on meditating upon *Radha-Govinda-lila*, instead of entering *Radha-Govinda-lila*, he will rather entangle with the ladies and gents of this world. He will become entangled in the domain of lust and he will have to go to hell instead of going up to Goloka.

Carmma-mamsamaya - kama, prema - cidanandadhama. The carnal appetite is lust, whereas Love is the Abode of Divine Ecstasy. So imitation is not success. It rather degrades. Imitation degrades. Imagination is only a mental exercise.

Devotee: What if that mental exercise is done with faith?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Mind is separate. *Sraddha* is connected with soul, *atma*, and mind is matter. Mind is material: a part of material potency.

This is also clarified in *Gita*:

bhumir apo 'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhir eva ca

ahankara itiyam me bhinna praktir astadha

(Bhagavad-gita, 7.4)

Mind is a product of the material potency, and the *jiva* is a product of *parasakti*, the principal potency; and *Svarupa-sakti*, the Lord's Personal Potency, is higher than the *jiva*. The nature of the mind is mental speculation (*manodharma*). That has nothing to do with truth. That is drawn from the material world, the world of misconception. The mind is full of misconception (*avan-manaso gocarah*). Mind cannot reach the stage of feeling or perceiving truth proper. It is only related to mundane things or exploitation.

Devotee: But isn't pure mind a product of *sraddha*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Mind cannot be pure, just as a fossil cannot

produce life. Similarly, mind cannot produce *sraddha*. *Sraddha* is original and fundamental. When the Supreme Lord appears in the heart, mind vanishes. Reality is just the opposite. Darkness cannot produce light: light comes, darkness vanishes. So truth appears when real pure consciousness appears, and mental speculation vanishes. The mind is concerned with misconception. It is an element of the *aparasakti*, the inferior potency. That potency is both subtle and gross. Earth, water, fire, air and ether are gross; mind, intelligence and ego are subtle; but they're all material. Soul is transcendental. And *Svarupa-sakti* or the Lord's Personal Potency, *bhajana* or Divine Service, and Goloka-Vaikuntha are all Supra-mundane and Transcendental - on the other side of the soul, not on the lower side where the mind is located. Mind emerges from the ego, that is, the false ego, and it is made of the exploiting tendency. But Mahaprabhu says, *mora mana - vrndavana*: "My speculation is on the other side - Vrndavana." That is not an element of this mundane plane.

Devotee: So there is a pure mind?

Srila Guru Maharaj : Properly speaking, the word 'mind' does not deserve to be used in this context at all, otherwise everything will be wrongly equated. The residents of Goloka also possess senses, etc., but the affairs of the mundane world are never one with that. The mundane mentality is a product of exploitation, sense-exploitation.

We need relief from this mind. We are surrounded by poisonous thought.

In the narration of the *Tridandi-sannyasin* in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, all the

disciplines are common in that the mind should be checked.

danam svadharmo niyamo yamas ca

srutan ca karmani ca sad-vratani

sarve mano-nigraha-laksanantah

paro hi yogo manasah samadhih

(Bhagavatam, 11.23.45)

"Charity, constant and conditional prescribed duties, mental and sensual control, hearing the Scriptures, holy vows and duties - all these are observed to gain subjugation of the mind. Mental control is known as the supreme *yoga* ."

Devotee: You were talking about *kirtana* ; I have read that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that *japa* (private chanting) is also related to *kirtana* (congregational chanting, or preaching), and also that Srila Rupa Goswami says there are three types of *japa* , namely *manasika* or mental, *vacika* or vocal, and *upamsu* or whispered. Which is proper for us, and which is the most effective?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In *upamsu* there is no sound, only movement of the lips; and in *manasika* there is no lip movement. You ask which is superior of the three types?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Whatever is internally real will be superior. *Japa* must be genuine, not imitative. Our attention should always be towards the negative side. If we can practice that in a real way, our promotion cannot be checked. But without qualification, if we are very eager to go upward, there will be a tendency to fall down. *Dasyaya te mama raso 'stu raso 'stu satyam*: "May I have the aspiration for servitude." For *bhajana* or internal Service, such a temperament should always be followed. *Tad dasa-dasa-dasanam dasatvam dehi me prabho* .

Promotion is inevitable if we always try to adhere to the lower duty.

Eagerness for promotion is the enemy. That is for *pratistha* (renown), and that will undermine everything. Srila Prabhupada said that imitation arises from the

attraction for *pratistha* or desire to hold the superior position and acquire a name for oneself. That is the great enemy. Don't fall prey to that *pratistha*, eagerness to hold the higher position. Rather, *dainyam* - humility, is the healthy sign of a devotee.

Devotee: Maharaj, we see in the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* that sometimes the glories of silent chanting are mentioned, and then in other places we see that the glories of chanting very loudly, as in the case of Haridasa Thakura, are extolled. So, what is the adjustment?

Tangible Depth in Divinity

Srila Guru Maharaj: Only a theoretical understanding won't help you much. Try to catch the spirit of the thing. When backed by the *sadhu*, the *Guru* of very high type, you can do anything. By the grace of his support, whatever *kirtana*, etc., you may do, will be effective. Meditating may have been praised as more efficient in a particular context, but if you venture to superficially try and chant in that way, the opposition will be so great you'll be nowhere - you will turn to be an atheist. It can happen if you don't have sufficient support to fight against the odds.

Don't venture to attack the enemy when your position is weak. But when backed by the great generals and many munitions, you must march on.

That will help us to engage in real *kirtana*.

The real factor is *sadhu-sanga*. It has association with the higher power.

Otherwise, nothing has any value. The stand must be taken on the real plane - *sadhu* and *sastra*. We must cultivate the real thing. That is the all-important factor always to keep up the reality of the *bhajana*. For the weaker devotee, the *sadhaka* or aspirant, the greatest necessity is *sadhu-sanga*, and the Scriptures are necessary for knowledge. *Sadhu-sastra-krpa*. Then *kirtana* will be best.

Vrndavana Dasa Thakura says that one feeds himself, another feeds thousands and feeds himself. Who's the greater? *Kirtana* is to cultivate oneself and help many others to cultivate at the same time. But when you have no capital of your own, if you go to preach you will meet such opposition, *asat-sanga*, that the *ankura*, the bud, will be nipped. In that case, if you are *kanistha-adhikari*, neophyte, don't go to attack others without vigorous backing. *Kirtana* means to

preach, or to attack others in a sense. Don't venture, as *kanistha-adhikari*. You'll be turned into an atheist. Only after passing through the proper stages - *sravana-dasa*, *varana-dasa*, *sadhana-dasa* and *prapana-dasa* (the phases of hearing, acceptance, practice, and attainment) - then you can preach

independently (*apana-dasa*). Otherwise, only with the help of someone in *prapana-dasa* can you go to preach.

We should have an immovable connection with reality, an absolute conception of reality. Such a stable position is necessary. Invulnerable. A sure position, what is what - *sambandha jnana*. Then we shall be able to understand and harmonize the differences that we find in the writings of the *Acaryas*; what applies where - under what circumstances a particular line has been advised to be taken up, and under what circumstances another has been advised. Practical knowledge.

Humility

Devotee: Maharaj, this morning we were talking about humility. What is the perfection of humility for the *kanistha-adhikari*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It may vary for different persons. So one has to think out his own way. Humility means 'to not encroach on the rights of others.' And also, it should not be such as to kill one's own self. It must be natural.

At the time of entering the present Bagh Bazaar Math (of Sri Gaudiya Math in Calcutta), there was a festival. From a rented house, the Deities were brought on a chariot in procession. There was chanting and dancing, and the Deities were installed in the new Temple.

Mahaprasadam was distributed. At twelve or one o'clock that night we went to bed. My bed was just nearby the bed of one of my Godbrothers, a learned professor. He was very humble. In the morning, the professor said to me, speaking very slowly, "Last night, I felt so much weakness that I thought I was dying. I thought that I would arouse you, but then again I thought, 'No, why should I disturb the Vaisnava? He's so tired tonight, and having his rest, so let me wait'; and after waiting a little I gained some strength, so I did not have to disturb you. But I'm still very weak now." Very slowly, and soberly, he told these things. He was dying, and he did not arouse me, only for fear of disturbing my rest.

When I heard these things from his lips that morning, although of course he put it very gently, it struck me like thunder! I at once went to Prabhupada and informed him that such was the case: "A gentleman was almost dying last night - but he was too meek to disturb me." Prabhupada and the devotees also knew of our professor Godbrother's nature. They took the matter seriously and immediately called for a doctor.

Sometimes I think such humility to be dangerous. The disciple's life is a valuable property of his Guru Maharaj's, not merely his own. He's not to be concerned with only his interest, but he should live in the interest of his Gurudeva. I could not appreciate such humility.

Everything must be of a real characteristic - connected with reality. I am thirsty - perhaps I won't request any Vaisnava, "Please help me with a glass of water." Then my disease may continue, for the sake of penny-wise pound-foolishness. Common sense should be utilized always.

Devotee: Just before Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj left the world, he was in Vrndavana. He was lying on the bed, unable to eat anything; his condition was so bad he could barely take even a glass of water. But I marked that when anyone visited him, he would, even in that condition, always say to the devotees, "Give them *Prasadam* ." He himself could not eat anything -

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, he wanted to travel through the whole of Vrndavana and circumambulate Govardhana by bullock-cart. But Krsnadasa Babaji Maharaj's help was sought, and he came and was somehow able to dissuade him from that plan. Despite his serious condition of health, Swami Maharaj wanted to go to all the places of *Lila* like Radha-kunda and Govardhana, offer obeisances, and return.

So the fact is that anything in connection with God - all types of *bhajana* - all are good. We are not against anything of that type. But we must consider what will be most effective according to our capacity. At the same time we must not commit any offense by omission. If we say that *smarana* is superior and that the other types of *bhajana* like *pada-sevana*, etc., are of a lower order, how can we be so audacious as to condemn them in such a way? Still, we may distinguish very cautiously, but not merely to satisfy our curiosity. Only when the necessity arises shall we venture to establish the superiority of Laksmi over Sukadeva, or Ambarisa, and so on. But we must not venture to make light of such matters.

These are all serious points.

To consider one Vaisnava over another is not a game: the points are very subtle. They are devotees, and we must not venture to place one above the other according to our crude necessity. It is not an academic exercise that as a professor we shall amass some theoretical knowledge to quote to the students. It should not be accepted in that line. We shall always be conscious of the practical side: "They are so great, and where am I? Who am I passing judgment over?" There should be some limit to our adventurous audacity.

Devotee: My friend was relating last night that you once said 'humility is accepting no position.'

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. 'No position' because a servant has no independent position - his position is always on the command of the master. He's always situated within infinite possibility. But he's humble to his master, not to the *goondas* (rogues). His humility must be chiefly towards whom? "I am humble, the lowest of the low, to whom? Towards my master. I am humble towards the Lord's own, the Vaisnava. I am humble there." When it is necessary for Hanumanji to burn the golden city of Lanka, his humility is not disturbed. He is as humble as anyone can be in carrying out the order of Lord Ramacandra. He is fully given, wholly surrendered.

Humility, in other words, is surrendering. Humility means no opposition to the command of the master who is related to Vaikuntha, the upper section; not to the ordinary street zone, or tiger, or serpent. Humility does not drag them into the relativity of the serpent, tiger or jackal. Their real relationship is with the Vaisnava. That is the plane where the devotee takes his stand. He's concerned with the Vaisnava. And 'humble' means that he does not resist his master's instruction. Without opposition, he carries out whatever order comes to him. He is humble.

He possesses humility, *sunicata*. He is not sitting on a seat of prejudice.

Generally we think of humility as pertaining to the outside world, but this is not the meaning. To the standard-thinking person, the members of the outside world are deluded they are mad. Humility is not in the standard of madness, or catering to the mad people. A madman has no standard of his own. So humility means to have a standard from the standard world. Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Prabhupada has defined humility as 'that which is absent where there is a spirit of enjoyment.' Enjoying spirit, or exploitation, means aggression. There, there cannot be humility.

Humility is only cent-per-cent Service. There is no humility in exploitation, or renunciation either. These two are opposed to the normal nature of the world. They are totally misconceived. They are enemies.

They are the challenging element to the normal reality. Do you understand?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: The spirit of exploitation and the spirit of renunciation - both are a revolt against the proper smooth working of the truth. So they are totally misconceived. And real humility must be in the relativity of the full aspect of the truth, not with the misconceived world. The standard is not of the misconceived, the madman.

Devotee: Yes. What about spiritual aggression? Like competition.

There's a competitive spirit between two persons who are doing the same thing. Then where's the place for humility there?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There will be humility if it is really Service, because its object is the Center. The devotee feels his inspiration and direction from there, and cooperates accordingly. He is connected with the Absolute Center, so competition may be arranged by *Yogamaya*. He is not responsible because his necessity is only for the Center. As we discussed, the Absolute is designed that way, but not out of necessity.

Aher iva gatih premnah, svabhava-kutilla bhavet. It seems to be crooked, but it is not; it is the very nature of absolute dealings. It is necessary only for the variegatedness of the Service of Kṛṣṇa. It is designed from the upper quarter. The devotees are not responsible for that.

Devotee: So we must not infringe on the property of others. There may be competition, but we should not infringe on the property of others?

Our Duty

Srila Guru Maharaj: Our duty will always be to dedicate ourselves more and more intensely - and we shall do that according to how we may be interfered with by the higher agency. We must always keep ourselves ready for that. Cent-per-cent we shall obey the handling from the upper house, without any hesitation. That is our duty. Whatever will be asked of us, we shall do. On the battlefield, if the general asks a particular battalion to fight in the first battle, and they say, "Why shouldn't the second battalion be commanded to go? Why should we go first? We shall die, and they will rejoice the victory in the last battle? Why should we go first?" What do you say?

Devotee: That is not dedication.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course. The military will shoot you then and there! "That is our consideration from above; it is not left to you whether Battalion 1, 2, 3 or 4 will go." Only the highest brains have command. Complaint against that high command means to die - to be done away with immediately.

Devotee: So, Maharaj, Arjuna followed the instructions of Krsna without question - whenever Krsna ordered him to shoot, he did so. He faithfully followed whatever instructions he received. In one incident, Yudhishthira did not follow the instructions of Lord Krsna; but when the five Pandavas were on the *mahaprasthan*a or voluntary journey to court death, Arjuna fell prior to Yudhishthira. Why did Arjuna have to fall?

Devotion - relative and Absolute

Srila Guru Maharaj: That is not the criterion of the highest devotion.

Yudhishthira's achievement was a separate thing. Devotion proper is not connected there. That is some worldly affair of *sattva-guna*. Yamaraja, in the form of a dog, went on - but Arjuna had to fall, Bhima had to fall.

The test was something else, connected with the mundane world. And they went to Svarga, Heaven. That is not the highest attainment, but only a show of the outer case of the Pandavas. Really, the Pandavas are *sakhas* or friends of Krsna, but their going to Svarga is a separate outward affair. When the Pandavas reached Svarga, they saw that Duryodhana and others had already arrived there. Although the position of Duryodhana and company was much lower - they were

the enemy camp - nonetheless, after death they all achieved their good and honored position in Svarga.

Yudhisthira went with his old body of *sattva-guna*, worldly goodness. A *ksatriya* who dies on the battlefield is rewarded with life in Heaven.

Yudhisthira went there, keeping his mortal body, although the others had to die first in order to take appropriate forms for that plane. But the plane was only that of *sattva-guna*, Svarga, and not the *aprakṛta* or Transcendental Planes of Vaikuntha, Dvaraka, Mathura or Goloka.

Similarly, it is also mentioned in the story of the Kesavatara (Incarnations from hair) that Lord Visnu gave a boon that a black and a white hair from his head would go and save the Earth from the horrors of

the burden of sins she was suffering from. Those hairs are said to have taken the forms of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They took up those two robes, but in that instance They are only *Bhu-bhara-haranakari* Avatars, or Descents appearing to relieve the Earth of its burden, and not *Svayam Bhagavan* or the Supreme Lord in Person. The Lord as He is in Vrndavana is entirely distinct.

So also it has been seen in many instances that the outer case is one thing, the inner man is another. The lower personality is absorbed. Just as when the prime minister comes to the city, the state governor's function is absorbed in him, if he wishes. When the king comes to visit the colony, all the officers' powers really vanish in him. Whatever he does must automatically be done by them, their own respective personalities dead. So when the higher descends into the lower case, the lower case loses its value. Then, when it retires, the lower case remains and the higher case ascends.

Nitai-Gaurahari bol! We pray to Nityananda Prabhu. We want to come to an adjusted, former position: "If I have committed any offense, *aparadha*, when dealing with so many subtle things about the great personages, please, Nityananda Prabhu, absolve me of that offense and restore me to my normal humble position."

sarva-vaisnavera pa'ye kari namaskara,

ithe aparadha kichu nahuka amara

Vrindavana Dasa Thakura says, "I bow at the feet of the Vaisnavas; may there be no offense in my attempt to serve them."

When we deal with so many great things, such as trying to speak about great personalities of the highest order, we should beg Nityananda Prabhu to pardon us for our audacity. He is *patita-pavana*, savior of the fallen souls. He is *adosa-darsi* - He generally does not take any offense.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread - where angels fear to tread, fools rush in. Like fools, we rush into the subtlest realm of sentiments of the high order; so we must beg to be excused by the High Personalities. *Apasiddhanta* or philosophical adulteration strikes very harshly. It was Svarupa Damodara's Service to first examine any poems or writings for purity before they were taken to Mahaprabhu. If writings with *apasiddhduta* were offered to Mahaprabhu, He would be disturbed in a very cruel way. *Apasiddhanta* cruelly attacks the ideal of the higher-thinking persons.

There is a narration by Kalidasa about a king who required a palanquin carrier. At random he selected a man from the crowd, not knowing that the man was a learned man, a *pandit*. When bearing a corner of the palanquin, the man did not carry it steadily, due to his avoiding the ants on the road.

The king inquired,

" *Skandam kim badhati ?*" (Literally, "Do you shoulder [sic] hurt?").

The pandit replied,

" *Na tatha badhate skandam yatha badhati badhate* " - "My shoulder doesn't pain me as much as your 'pain' (your grammatical misuse of *badhati* for *badhate*)!"

So, subtle beating is there in the higher sphere, in the higher sentiment.

They may be offended. We shall, not with curiosity but with all humility and all respects to Them, try to enter into that garden without disturbing any plant or person roaming in that sphere. Otherwise our talks will be pure intellectualism, and not *Harikatha*.

Chapter 4 Heralding the Twilight

A Pioneer of Exclusive Devotion

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura appeared (in 1838) in a very famous Kayastha family, bearing the title Dutta. In Calcutta there is a place called Hat-khola Dutta which was named after the family. Near Birnagar there was a big village named Ula, and the family of the title Mustauphi were landowners there. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's mother came from this line. Bhaktivinoda Thakura was born and brought up at Ula, and he studied at Krishnanagar College. Of course, he had exceptional talent.

He came into contact with the then educated society. Especially, there was a Mr. Duff, a Christian missionary who established the Scottish Church College. Duff was encouraging and attracting many of the young Bengalis of the time to take up Christianity. Gradually, Bhaktivinoda Thakura had close association with the Brahmo Society, the so-called culturally advanced followers of Ram Mohan Ray. Maharsi Devendranath Thakura's elder brother, Dvijendranath, was his very intimate friend.

For his livelihood he accepted government service. He was posted at Orissa in the position of subdivisional officer. He was also posted as inspector of the Jagannatha Puri Temple, where his duty was to guard against corruption. At that time he came into contact with the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and he tried to read it. He was gradually charmed by *Bhagavatam*, *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* and the life of Sri Chaitanyadev.

The Brahmo Association had expected much of him because of his scholarly nature; he could write and debate well. But after coming into contact with the *Bhagavatam*, he dissociated himself from them. When he was serving in Dinajpur he gave his speech on *Bhagavatam*, and it was then that he completely separated himself from the Brahmo school, and he was seen to side with the Vaisnava school of thought in the line of Mahaprabhu. And gradually he also read the *sastras* and wrote many books on Vaisnavism.

After his retirement, he wanted to go to Vrndavana and pass the rest of his life there. But he repeatedly had a dream that he must discover the actual Birthplace of Sri Chaitanyadev. He could not neglect that dream.

He again entered into service at Krishnanagar, and there, he consulted the records of the locality. With the help of those records, and by his divine

inspiration, he discovered the Birthplace at Yogapitha, Mayapur.

Then, with deepened interest, he visited the entire Nabadwip-mandal; and with reference to the Scriptures he gave a description of both the ancient and contemporary holy places in the *Dhama* of Mahaprabhu. He established a committee to ensure that the Service of Mahaprabhu's place of Advent continue. Lastly, he handed it over to our Prabhupada.

From the beginning, the fourth son of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Sri Bimala Prasad (the family name of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami) was naturally inclined to the Service of Mahaprabhu. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura finally entrusted him with the Direct Service of Mayapur. He accepted that, a little hesitantly at first, but to his last moment he conducted the Service faithfully. In that matter, from the practical standpoint Kunjabihari Vidyabhusana, later Srimad Tirtha Maharaj, assisted Prabhupada a great deal. Gradually many scholars also gathered around him. With their help, he started the movement of Sri Gaudiya Math. He was inspired to preach, and he did so up to the last moment of his life.

When Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura passed away, Srila Prabhupada arranged a condolence meeting in a public hall and invited many respectable gentlemen. Amongst them were the leading scholars of the time, including Bipin Pal, the then principal of the Metropolitan School; and Satish Sarkar, Panchkari Bandopadhyay, and others.

New Thought to the world

They all spoke very highly about Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, recognizing that he gave new thought to the society at large; his writings were of original character, not stereotyped. His investigations into Vaisnavism excelled that of all the modern *Acaryas*. Shishir Ghosh also once said, "We have heard of the Six Goswamis of the time of Mahaprabhu, but Bhaktivinoda Thakura's writings prove that he holds the seventh position amongst the Goswamis. He has left us such extensive and original writing about the teachings of Sri Chaitanyadev."

In this way, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura left the world his literature - he is in his literature, present forever. He has delivered his writings about the Teachings of Mahaprabhu and Bhagavatam in a systematic and scientific way, suitable to the modern age. Our debt unto his Holy Feet has no end.

The Predominant Guru of Srila Prabhupada

Although Prabhupada, as suggested by Bhaktivinoda Thakura, took initiation from Gaura Kisora Babaji Maharaj, he still held Bhaktivinoda Thakura as his *Guru*, substantially. Formally, by the order of Bhaktivinoda Thakura, he took Gaura Kisora Babaji Maharaj as Gurudeva. Bhaktivinoda Thakura selected Srila Gaura Kisora for him, but from what we have found in him, he knew Bhaktivinoda Thakura as his *Guru* from the internal consideration. We find his outside and inside was filled with Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Bhaktivinoda Thakura not in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense. Prabhupada inaugurated many Maths (Ashrams and Temples), and we find that he named the Deities "Vinoda-Vilasa," "Vinoda-Rama," "Vinodananda," "Vinoda-Prana," and so on.

He saw everything through his Gurudeva, Bhaktivinoda Thakura. His attempt to approach Sri Sri Radha Govinda or Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is inconceivable without Bhaktivinoda Thakura's intervention in him. I attempted to write something about Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and I thought that this was the key to Prabhupada's affection towards me. His attention was drawn to me because I tried to give the greatness of Bhaktivinoda Thakura's character to the public in a systematic way. It is my own feeling. He can give everything to one who is a little attached to Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

That was his spirit. He thought himself indebted to Bhaktivinoda Thakura's holy life, so much so, that he saw Srimati Radharani and Gadadhara Pandit in him. This is the highest ideal of *Guru-tattva*: Gadadhara Pandit in *Gaura-lila*, and Srimati Radharani in *Krsna-lila*, in *Madhura-rasa*. He also once said, "If we raise our vision and observe, we shall find Srimati Radharani in *Gurudeva*." If we raise our head a little and search, then we shall find that it is Srimati Radharani Herself who is behind the function of *Gurudeva*; all others are channels or instrumentals, but the real source of Grace as *Guru* springs from the Original Source of Service, of Love. He saw Bhaktivinoda Thakura in that light.

sakadd-haritvena samasta-sastrair

uktas tatha bhavyata eva sadbhih

kim tu prabhor yah priya eva tasya

vande guroh sri-caranaravindam

"According to all the Scriptures, *Gurudeva* is directly the Lord Himself, and the pure devotees also realize the same. He is actually a simultaneously one and different Manifestation of the Lord, different in the sense that he is the Lord's dearmost servitor. I offer my obeisances unto the Lotus Feet of that Divine Master, *Sri Gurudeva*."

We are asked to see *Gurudeva* not opaque, but transparent - transparent to such a degree that through him the highest end, the highest conception of Service, can be seen and attained. We can attain it there. If we are earnest, we shall find the highest link, from the very Source. So we are requested not to see *Guru* as limited in his ordinary personification, but as the Transparent Mediator of the highest function in his line. We can see this only if our vision is deep. According to the disciple's depth of *sraddha*, he will see the Lord present in his *Gurudeva*. The *Guru* Principle, *Guru-tattva*, is very special, very noble, very broad and very deep.

So we are warned against thinking that our *Gurudeva* is in mortal relativity. Prabhupada showed us by his ideal conduct how much earnestness one may have for *Gurudeva*. We have witnessed this in his practices and teachings. *Gurvaikānistha* - exclusive adherence to the Service of *Sri Guru*. Bhaktivinoda Thakura was his very being. Everything was Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Indomitable Loyalty to Mahaprabhu: Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada

Devotee: Is it true that Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami would openly criticize Isvarachandra Vidyasagar (a famous Sanskrit scholar of the time)?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Once Vidyasagar wrote in a book '*isvara-nirakara-caitanya-svarupa*' ('The Lord is without any figure, and He is a mass of consciousness'). As but a young boy, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada went to him and challenged, "What have you written here? You say *Isvara*, Lord, and then you say *nirakara*, formless! Where have you found this? *Isvara*, the Creator, the Master - He is *nirakara*, formless?! Where have you found that *Isvara* is *nirakara*? He has a type of *akara*, form, and that is *Cidakara*, a Transcendental Form. But you say He is only a mass of consciousness and without any figure, and He is the Creator? Where have you found this?" In this way he challenged Vidyasagar. But he was very young, and Vidyasagar may not have cared for the challenge. Nonetheless, he did his duty.

That was his temperament - he would always challenge. He had to challenge whatever was against the line of Mahaprabhu, otherwise he could have the satisfaction of having done his duty.

Devotee: No compromise.

Srila Guru Maharaj: No compromise. Protest. Once Rabindranath Tagore wrote articles in some book under a pen-name, and Prabhupada also wrote protesting against those writings, also under a pen-name.

Devotee: Maharaj, did you personally spend some time with Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. In my later years with the mission I got chances to live with him quite often. Many persons used to come and visit him, and perhaps he liked to keep me with him to talk with them in a respectable way and to authoritatively explain his teachings to them. In his later years his memory faded, so when he spoke, some appropriate slokas from the Scriptures were required to be supplied, to indicate and support his line of thought. Very few of us could do that. When he was trying to recollect a certain *sloka* in support of his speech, I could generally supply it immediately, and sometimes in advance as well. Of course, we originally heard all those *slokas* and their proper representation from him only.

Infinite courage of the Pioneer

When Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura began the Service of the *Dhama* and Mahaprabhu, he had to do many things to attract the public to accept his discovery of the *Dhama* as authentic. At that time, the place was uninhabited. Gradually a brick building was made, and the worship of the Deity of Mahaprabhu was begun.

The Temple came later. Generally the *Brahmana* cooks he required would not stay there very long because it was an isolated place and there were violent elements nearby. To ensure that the Service continued, he had to undergo many undesirable things. For example, sometimes he had to prepare *ganjika* (hemp) by his own hand, for the cook! Otherwise, the cook would have left. At times, when 'respectable' persons came, he had to make arrangements for tobacco. There were many other trials.

Our Guru Maharaj, Prabhupada, also did similar things, to the extreme.

When Anderson, the Governor, was invited to Mayapur, at that time it was arranged with a Calcutta hotel to bring appropriate food for the function, including even meats. The hotelier was arranged to cater for the Governor and his entourage. And when Prabhupada suggested some similar approach in foreign preaching also, I modestly protested that if the meat dishes, non-vegetarian dishes, were served in the Math area it would bring criticism to the mission; to which he replied, "No, no! I decided all these things thousands of births ago. We have to do anything and everything for the Service of Mahaprabhu." That was his answer.

Vaikuntha-vrtti - no *kuntha* , no limitation: 'I am prepared to do anything for the Service of Mahaprabhu, for the propagation of His Mission. The Grace of Mahaprabhu should be distributed throughout the length and breadth of the whole world. And for that, anything should be done. No stone unturned. Physical connection is no connection. We shall try to save our internal purity, that is all.' And to save so many souls from impure habits and diet, Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj also took the risk of external contamination by filthy things. He had to go to the place of that anti-atmosphere to save them. If the house is on fire, one must run the risk of burns to his body if he really wants to save the inhabitants.

The Thakura's Divine Vision and Foresight

Devotee: Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda also had a great vision for the world.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. He saw in his divine eye that *Prema-dharma*

, the Religion based on Divine Love, is so self-evident in character that the intelligent could never avoid embracing such a conception of Pure Religion Is the highest. Love - *Prema* - the fine intellect cannot but detect the purity in the Love in religion, in its highest conception. His idea was: 'With an unbiased mind, the Western thinkers cannot but appreciate the doctrine of Divine Love, as given out by Sri Chaitanyadev. So I am sure that in the future many of the Western scholars will come under the flag of Sri Chaitanyadev.' This was his conviction, and he mentioned this in lectures that he delivered throughout Bengal.

When Sripad Bhakti Saranga Goswami Maharaj returned from preaching in

England, he brought one Mr. Burchett back with him. A meeting was held at the Bagh Bazaar Math. That meeting was presided over by a gentleman of the name Hiran Dutta, a good scholar and a Theosophist. In his talk he said, "When we were students at City College, Bhaktivinoda Thakura delivered a lecture there to the effect that in the near future Western scholars would come and join the *Sankirtana* under the banner of Mahaprabhu. Now, clearly, I can bear witness to the fact that his prediction is beginning to come true. I heard the lecture in my young days, and now in my old age I see the evidence - it is going to be true. I am very glad for that."

Devotee: Did Your Grace ever have the darsana of Thakura Bhaktivinoda?

Srila Guru Maharaj: No. He left the world in 1914, and I joined the mission in 1926, twelve years later.

Devotee: Perhaps you met other persons who had his contact?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There was one Parvat Maharaj who lived next door to Bhaktivinoda Thakura when he passed his old age in Godruma.

"To spread the Holy Name around..."

Parvat Maharaj said that there was only a partition wall between his house and Bhaktivinoda Thakura's. That was at Surabhi Kunja. From about three o'clock in the morning, Bhaktivinoda Thakura would rise and take the Name of Krsna, the *Mahamantra*, at the top of his voice. Parvat Maharaj described it like this. As though calling someone from afar - with this spirit Bhaktivinoda Thakura would chant the Holy Name. That Maharaj was astonished to see such behavior. There was a cement chair, and when Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura felt tired he took his seat and rested there awhile. And then after some time he would again wander in the garden, chanting at the top of his voice, "*Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna !*"

With such animation in his voice he was calling - calling a person; with this spirit, and not in a formal way, but with a material hankering, he was calling for the Lord.

There was another thing I also heard about him from another source, Ram Gopal Vidyabhusana, an M.A. and Barrister-at-law. Ram Gopal Vidyabhusana told me, "Once we went to visit him. We had heard that a Government officer, an educated man, had become a Vaisnava Babaji.

So we went to see him, and someone amongst us asked him, 'Please speak something about Krsna and *Krsna-nama* (the Holy Name of Krsna).'

"After a moment, Bhaktivinoda Thakura then said, 'Oh, you want to hear something about Krsna, you want? You want *Krsna-nama* ?' In this way he continued for some time: 'Krsna? You are so fortunate? You have come to hear *Krsna-nama*?'"

"Then the consequence of that inquiry had such an influence on his body and mind, that as it is written by him personally in his own poem, *Sri-Nama-Mahatmya* :

krsna-nama dhare kata bala

visaya-vasananale, mora citta sada jvale,

ravi-tapta marubhumi sama;

karna-randhra patha diya, hrdis majhe pravesiya

varisaya sudha anupama [1]

hrdaya haite bale, jihvara agrete cale,

sabda-rupe nace anuksana;

kanthe more bhange svara, anga kape thara thara,

sthira haite na pare carana [2]

cakse dhara, dehe gharmma, pulakita saba carmma,

vivarna haila kalevara;

murcchita haila mana, pralayera agamana,

bhave sarva-deha jara jara [3]

kari' eta upadrava, citte varse sudhadrava,

more dare premera sagare;

kichu na bujhite dila, more ta' batula kaila,

mora citta-vitta saba hare [4]

lainu asraya ya'ra, hena vyavahara ta'ra

balite na pari e sakala;

krsna-nama icchamaya, yahe yahe sukhi haya,

sei mora sukhera sambala [5]

premera kalika nama, adbhuta rasera dhama,

hena bala karaye prakasa;

isat vikasi' punah, dekhaya nija-rupa-guna,

citta hari' laya krsna-pasa [6]

purna vikasita hanya, vraje more yaya lany,

dekhaya more svarupa - vilasa;

more siddha deha diya, krsna-pase rakhe giya,

e dehera kare sarva-nasa [7]

krsna-nama cintamani, akhila-rasera khani,

nitya-mukta suddha-rasamaya;

namera balai yata, saba lay 'e hai hata,

tabe mora sukhera udaya [8]

Cakse dhara - From my eyes tears flowed; *dehe gharmma* - my body perspired; *murcchita haila mana* - I fell into a faint; *kari' eta upadrava* - the Holy Name created a great turmoil in me; *citte varse sudha-drava* - causing a rain of nectarine current in my heart; *more dare premera sagare* - and casting me into the ocean of ecstasy, of Love; *kichu na bujhite dila, more ta' batula kaila* - I

could not feel the environment around me, and became as though mad; *mora citta-vitta saba hare* - I lost myself in that thought. For an illuminating full translation extracted from Srila Guru Maharaj's informal talks, see p.126-129, Search for Sri Krsna: Reality the Beautiful, published by Guardian of Devotion Press. -

Ed. (search for Saranagati)

That gentleman, Ram Gopal Vidyabhusana said, "I saw with my own eyes that all these symptoms were displayed in his body and mind, simply upon hearing our inquiry. Bhaktivinoda Thakura said, 'You are so fortunate, you have come to hear *Krsna-nama* from me? Krsna - ! Krsna - !' In this way, he entered into another domain, and so many symptoms and expressions appeared in his body and mind - convulsions, tears, all these things." I heard this from an eye-witness.

Devotee: Is it true that prior to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's appearance the Vaisnava tradition had become very much neglected?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Very few *suddha* Vaisnavas were to be found, just before the appearance of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. But he adjusted religion in a modern garb, and so it was easy for many regardful students to come forward and accept *suddha* Vaisnavism. It had been much molested by pseudo-followers. The real ideal had become eclipsed, and so for the inquisitive it was difficult to have real entrance and real attachment for Gaudiya Vaisnavism.

The so-called *Babajis* were especially responsible for disturbing the ideal. They hailed from any caste, they could marry, and they simply went on taking the name with no proper practice or feeling of real earnestness for the truth. They dragged on their lives with no pure practices or pure habits, and worst of all, in the name of religion they freely mixed with women. That brought in return a hatred for them in society. Similarly, those '*Goswamis*' who took up initiating disciples as their trade also lost their honor in the general respectful society, because they had some low association. The *Babajis* and *Goswamis* lost their prestige in society because of their imitative character. But *Gaudiya Math* came out with the real spirit of religion, and pure practices subsequently followed. So the attention of the educated inquirers after truth was drawn to Gaudiya Math and they flocked together.

Devotee: After hearing about great personalities like Srila Bhaktivinoda

Thakura, we feel ourselves to be very insignificant.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. We can but do our might, contribute our might as much as possible for the Service of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Chapter 5 The Krsna Sun

If we want our shelter, it must come from overhead. *Asraya* or shelter is not under our feet - shelter should be over the head. The principal Vedic mantra says,

tad visnoh paramam padam sada pasyanti surayah

diviva caksur atatam

The Holy Feet of Visnu who is pervading everywhere (*yah idam vyapnotiti visnuh*) - His feet, His lowest portion, is towards us. Paramam means 'very highly qualified, from all standpoints.' That is not to be neglected. From the standpoint of fine existence - knowledge as well as sweetness, the Absolute is *paramam padam* . *Sada pasyanti surayah* - the scholars are always conscious of the fact; this is the real basis of their life.

Man is not an animal, wandering over the earth, mountain or jungle, but the real man is in his consciousness, and he is always conscious of a higher entity. He is always seeing or conscious of that ideal. *Diviva caksur atatam* - vaguely or in a mystic way? No. As conspicuous, as clear and as real as the sun we see in the sky. *Tad visnoh paramam padam* . So we should really live and move in that consciousness. We are children of that conscious world.

Animal consciousness - the world of death

Tvam tu rajan marisyeti, pasu-buddhim imam jahi (Bha: 12.5.2). At the conclusion of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* , Sri Sukadeva Goswami gives a warning to Pariksit Maharaj to be conscious of the firm basis of his teachings. Deception is like a serpent that stealthily comes to bite and kill. Ignorance comes stealthily and takes the soul down to the world of animal consciousness, and we are all moving under the deception of this heavy flesh and blood; therefore heavier 'earth' is necessary to lift us above, up onto its lap.

Diviva caksur atatam. . .marisyeti, pasu-buddhim imam jahi : "So do away with your animal consciousness that you are flesh and blood. No!

You are not limited to flesh and blood, but you are a conscious unit, and you won't die. You are not a member of this dying world, where everything is sure to die on account of its malidentification. This is forced upon you - 'you must die, you must become infirm, you must be born, you must suffer from disease' - but all these are misidentification of your self with your body. This is animal consciousness: consciousness that you are an animal. But you are not so. You are a conscious unit, you are spirit, you are soul."

Not only is the soul immortal, not only does God exist, not only is He the Absolute Dispenser of good and bad - but we, ourselves, are units of the conscious world. So *pasu-buddhim imam jahi* - separate yourself eternally from that mania, from that misconception and false identification with this material aspect which is the result of your degraded life. Be reinstated in your glorious position as soul. And how is this possible? You are *tatastha* (marginal) by constitution, so you cannot stand on your own two feet. You must have some shelter - either mundane within your mundane identification, or above that, you must have some shelter above your head. O *tatastha-jiva* , you must have shelter in the *Svarupa-sakti* land, the final land.

The light of light

Paramam padam, the Divine Feet of Visnu, of Narayana, of Krsna, are like the sun to you, in the material comparison. That is, *caksuh* , or 'seer,' or that which makes feeling or seeing possible. If He is withdrawn, everything is dark. If Visnu's Supreme Plane is withdrawn, everything will be dark. That is the light of light, and you must be eternally conscious that above you is another soil, and your shelter is there, and you are a soul unit. You must bring about this radical change in you.

That plane is your shelter. This world is not your shelter. It is a prison-house to you. This broad and graphic comprehensive consideration must be the basis of spiritual understanding, otherwise there is danger of Sahajiyaism or imitationism. *Tad visnoh paramam padam* . We have to cross this 'Hindenburg Line.'*

*According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* , Paul von Hindenburg, 1847-1934, was a German field marshal during World War I. Noted for its immense strength, the 'Hindenburg Line,' also known as 'Siegfriedstellung,' was a defensive barrier improvised by the German Army on the Western Front, extending between

Soisons and Laon.

The Land of Service

Basically, this is the advice of *Rg-veda* , the first *Veda* that descends from the upper world to this world: "The primary requirement for you all is to conceive that there is a world above, and 'above' means in the line of consciousness. Your highest identity is that of consciousness, and you must adopt that conscious world above you as your shelter. You will live and move there. This is the radical change. Here, you are in the atmosphere of exploitation, but that is the land of service. There, you have to think in terms of service. That is on your head. That region is superior to the stuff you are made of. So do you want that connection?

Or do you prefer to reign in hell than to serve in heaven? What do you like? Consider, and then come forward. You can have a prospect of attaining everything up to Krsna, the Absolute. Otherwise you will have to revolve here in this world of 8,400,000 species":

jvlaja navalaksani sthavara laksa-vimsatih

krmayo rudra-sankhyakah paksinam dasa-laksakam

trimsal-laksani pasavah catur laksani manusah

(Visnu-purana)

"There are 900,000 aquatic, 2,000,000 immobile, 1,100,000 worm-cum-insect, 1,000,000 bird, 3,000,000 animal and 400,000 human species."

"These are the 8,400,000 classifications of species throughout which you will have to wander, in the world of action and reaction. You need to select your path. Do you want to be a member of the land of immortality? Do you want *janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi* (birth, death, old age and infirmity) - or immortality? If you want immortality, you will have to pay for the ticket. You will have to take the visa. You will have to prepare for such a categorical beginning. And the bond you have to sign is slavery - to Krsna. *Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya-dasa* . If you want to go to that mystic land, the land of infinite hope, prosperity and prospect, you will have to go as a slave - because that plane is made of a higher stuff than you yourselves are."

vaikunthera prthivy adi sakala cinmaya

mayika bhutera tathi janma nahi haya

(C.c. Adi 5.53)

There, earth, water, etc. - everything is made of consciousness, spirit.

And above that, there is *anandam* or ecstasy, not only a matter of consciousness. Although medicine seems bitter in the beginning, in a healthy state one may taste its sweetness. Our approach to the Divine Realm may also be experienced in this way. So, in *Raga-marga*, the path of Divine Love, and in Krsnaloka, there is not only consciousness, but beauty is the prevailing element there.

Ideal

A ship without a rudder drifts aimlessly in the ocean. But if I have taken to heart the particular ideal of Krsna, Mahaprabhu and *Bhagavatam*, then I am captured. My tuft of hair (*sikha*) is tied with the feet of Guru Maharaj and the Divine Grace. The tuft of hair is captured. The head is captured there, and everything will be done through the head, the part of the body which is most revered in this material world.

One who has a good ideal is in possession of the most valuable wealth. On the other hand, one will only hanker for *kanaka-kamini-pratistha* - popularity, materials of sense pleasure, and money - all these things; but they are all animal consciousness. They are all properties in the land of animal consciousness. A radical change must be effected in us if we really want a life worth living. Such is the importance of our ideal.

A man should be judged by his ideal. The greatness of the ideal he is trying to realize is to be marked. The man of the future, the man of tomorrow, should be judged by his ideal. If his ideal is great, he is great, because if he is sincere, tomorrow or very soon he will reach it. So our ideal is the all-important factor. We may not attain our high ideal very easily. It is not inferior 'merchandise' to be disposed of cheaply in the market; it is most valuable. But whatever the cost, no matter.

We should feel within, "I want no less than that highest thing, that *Advaya-jnana*, that Autocrat. That Goodness Autocrat, the Supermost Commander of

everything. I want Him, and nothing less, and I should live and move, and feel in myself that whatever I shall do, at every second, I am meant for that. I am meant for my ideal. I have no time to waste, or to hesitate for anything.

If every moment I move in every way with the ideal in my heart, I shall always make some progress towards it. If I can just stay in touch with my ideal, that will guide and inspire me. In any and every action, whatever I shall do or undo, eat, rest, etc., my ideal will be overhead.

And that will gradually take me out of all these entanglements and enticements, and one day or other I shall be able to reach it."

Divine attraction reveals the ideal

jata-sraddho mat-katha-su nirvinnah sarva-karmasu

veda duhkhatmakan kaman parityage 'py anisvarah

(Bhagavatam, 11.20.27)

"For one who has had the chance to acquire a taste and become attracted to talks of Me, My activity and My movement, no other temptation can any longer hold him under its power. He becomes indifferent to all other activity. The outcome is that he can understand within that all other things bear some unpleasant reaction. Yet, although he can conceive that they are all pain-producing, he is helpless to immediately free himself from their clutches. The debt is already incurred, and his debtors won't allow him to escape: 'I am in the midst of so many acquisitions. It is not very easy to leave them at once by my sweet will. Previously, I consciously incurred some obligations, and I cannot abruptly cut off their connection; they won't let me free.'"

tato bhajeta mam pritah sraddhalur drdha-niscayah

jusamanas ca tan kaman dukhodarkams ca garhayan

(Bhagavatam, 11.20.28)

"But the *sraddha* or pure attraction he has acquired for Me is of eternal nature. It cannot be subdued or cut off by any mundane or ordinary attempt. Despite undergoing so many sufferings, he goes on

remembering Me. His thinking, aspiration and earnestness is for Me, and the more he is compelled to suffer from the pressure of the environment, a firmness in Me becomes more and more sure, and finally, invulnerable.

And by standing the test of all these trials, he will stand - stand and grow beyond the jurisdiction of these mundane forces. The more pressure comes from outside, the more firmness he feels in the necessity of My help to him.

"At that time, he turns his back to all the pains of the world, and he keeps Me in front. He begins to move onward: 'Whatever happens to me, I can't complain. It is in my Master's jurisdiction whether He sees fit for me to undergo these trials or not. But I won't leave my new ideal - I can't. Whatever may come, it may happen, never mind.'

"Still, he abuses himself: 'What have I done? What have I done? It is rather justice that I should be tormented and troubled in such a way! It is not wrong! Really, just dealings have come to be exercised over me.

Why should I have committed this wrong? I entered this wrong alliance, entered into the tribe of the *goondas* for exploitation. The reaction that is coming to me is well and good.' He blames himself. He does not blame the environment for troubling him, but he sees a concentration camp within. He blames his own self, his own free will and fate. That becomes the nature of his temperament at that time. He does not look to place the fault on the shoulders of others, but he takes the whole burden: 'Yes, the environment is doing justice to me, the traitor, the ambitious, the oppressor of the environment.' When he's in such consciousness, his *Bhakti-yoga* or Devotional Engagement becomes more and more intense.

The intensity of his progress accelerates."

proktena bhaktiyogena bhajato ma 'sakrn muneh

kama hrdaya nasyanti sarve mayi hrdis thite

(Bhagavatam, 11.20.29)

"With accelerated motion, his intensity towards Me grows. Then, by My appearance, all his internal and external discrepancies are gradually destroyed and evaporated. When by such an approach he reaches My Domain, or rather, I come down, extending My existence to his heart - then everything else

disappears."

bhidyate hrdaya-granthis chidyante sarva-samsayah

ksiyante casya karmani mayi drste 'khilatmani

(Bhagavatam, 11.20.30)

Then *bhidyate hrdaya-granthis*: all the ties and entanglements, corners and angles, vanish. Crookedness vanishes. He finds himself in the midst of a straight, plain, graphic, spacious and all-embracing temperament.

His atmosphere changes. All the ties of so many attractions to various achievements are at once dissolved. They have no necessity in this land.

Hrdayenabhyyanujnato (*Manu* 2.1): internal approval comes to assure you that you have arrived in your own land. *Chidyante sarva-samsayah*: there is no room for any doubt. You find that all your hankerings are more than fulfilled here: "I was searching; my whole body was searching."

In *Vaisnava-padavali* (Anthology of Vaisnava Songs) there is an expression: *prati anga lage kande prati anga mora* . In the acme of Divinity, *Madhura-rasa* , where Srimati Radharani is *Sakti* (the Divine Potency of the Lord), She says, "My every limb is crying for the respective limb of My Lord; not only My Self, but every part of My Body earnestly aspires for the corresponding part of My Master's."

Chidyante sarva-samsayah - Every part bears witness: "Yes, we have reached the destination we were striving for, this is our full-fledged satisfaction. This is my soil, this is my home!" Every atom of the body will say it. No trace of any doubt will be found, for there is no longer any room for that. But every atom will find its fulfillment: "This is my home, this is my home! I am in home comfort, I find."

Our Cherished Goal

Ksiyante casya karmani : (The Lord says about His devotee) "And the force of reaction won't come to trouble him, to drag him down or attract him backwards. That, too, is severed." *Mayi drste 'khilatmani*: "I am the fullest of the full perfection. He will be able to trace My friendship."

This should be the course of our life, our cherished goal. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* tells us this. Home, sweet, sweet home. You are a child of that soil. In one word, that is the goal.

Why is that the highest goal? Because that is your home. *Svarupe sabara haya, golokete sthiti* . This one word 'home' is sufficient to attract you.

You are wandering in a foreign land, but here is your home. You'll get home comfort here, and you won't be able to deny that. So, back to God, back to home, back to Godhead.

God and Godhead

To avoid the Christian conception of 'God' our Guru Maharaj, Prabhupada, used the word 'Godhead.' 'God' is a particular conception of the Absolute, but 'Godhead' represents *Bhagavata* or the background of the conception of God, which is *Svayam Bhagavan* - the Supreme Lord Himself: This is the highest conception of God. This is the meaning. So more than 'back to God' is 'back to Godhead.' Srimad Swami Maharaj named his spiritual magazine from this consideration.

Back to Godhead - there is home. Unsettled, we are running hither and thither with no principle of life, so our position is very sad. But this is a troublesome life. To think, 'I can't put my faith anywhere,' means that I can't find a friend anywhere. I am friendless, moving amongst foreigners or maybe enemies. But I must have a friend or some friendly atmosphere. I must come into such company in which I can put full faith, in which I can believe and trust, otherwise my life will be miserable. If wherever I cast my glance I think, "I can't trust, I can't trust, all are enemies" - to live in such an atmosphere is to live in a particular prison-house; all uncertainty, all untrustworthiness; that is a very deplorable position. So, by God's grace *Sraddha* should come to us: "I can not only trust and believe, but I cannot but show my regard to a personality of the higher position." *Gurum evabhigacchet* .

Guru - the reliable source

When we suffer from uncertainty to the extreme, we shall hanker for connection with *Guru*, the reliable source. I can not only put an inquiry to him with faith and trust, but *Guru* is a guardian who is my well-wisher more than I am to my own self. 'Guardian' means a friend who thinks more of me than I think of myself. He

knows more about my welfare than I do. Such is the position to have a guardian, a friend, a *Guru*.

Narottama Thakura says, *asraya laiya bhaje tanre krsna nahi tyaje*: "If one can get a bona fide guardian, his future is ensured." Krsna cannot very easily dismiss the guardian, because the guardian has a solid position in the Lord's relationship; so if I enter into the domain of my guardian's care, my position will be ensured.

Ara saba mare akarana . Others, who have not yet been able to tie themselves with the Holy Feet of their guardian or *Guru* are in an uncertain position, and they may be deviated by any agent. Their future is deplorable.

If through our *sraddha* we can have a real ideal in life and acquire a real guardian, then certainly our future is ensured practically. Our only duty will be towards our guardian, our *Gurudeva* , and all other duties will be automatically accomplished.

So, to run throughout the length and breadth of this wide world, this land where nothing but various types of exploitation of various planes are existing, is to run as a ship without a rudder that can be swept away by sea-storm this side and that, endlessly, without purpose. It is through *sraddha* that we can connect with our highest goal of achievement and fulfillment. This matter must be solved. Then, real life begins. Any questions?

Devotee: Maharaj, you mentioned that the material world is like a prison-house. Are the demigods such as Brahma and Indra also

prisoners?

Srila Guru Maharaj: They are also prisoners, but as officers. Even prisoners may become officers on the sanction of the jail government. In the prison government, senior and qualified prisoners are also given a chance for a post. Is it not a fact?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: So their position is like that. They are also imprisoned, but their position is a little higher. A duty is deputed to them, but they are nonetheless prisoners.

Devotee: The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* says that there are fourteen planetary systems, and yet when we see the sky at night we see so many stars and planets, it seems that the number is unlimited.

Planes beyond planets

Srila Guru Maharaj: Those fourteen worlds are not only of this physical type, but range from physical to subtle. Creation stems from consciousness, towards matter. The gradation from matter up to consciousness is progressively finer and finer - the gap between matter and soul.

To fill the gap from gross to subtle, there is a progression of more and more subtle planes that finally vanish in the conscious area. The gradation from *jada* to *cetana*, from matter to spirit, or from unconsciousness to consciousness, occurs in so many steps, fine, finer, finest. It is to be conceived of in this way. Bhur-, Bhuvar-, Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, Satya-loka, then Viraja, then Brahmaloaka or Brahman.

In Brahman, we find the real existence of the soul. From Viraja downwards is the area of this material consciousness. In *Bhagavad-gita* we find:

indriyani parany ahur indriyebhyah param manah manasas tu pare buddhir buddher yah paratas tu sah (3.42) In brief, four stages of mundane elements in the middle are given here.

First is matter, second is the senses, third is mind and fourth is judiciousness or reason. Finally, there is the soul. But in more elaborate detail, there are also seven subdivisions of Bhur, etc., up to Satya-loka.

In this line, the soul is found in Brahman. *Paratas tu sah*. The word *sah* refers to *Brahman*. Matter may also be subdivided as stone, water, heat, gas, ether, etc. In one word it is matter, but one will also find subdivision of matter from gross to subtle. In stone one will find earth, coal, wood, maybe gold or silver. But all these elements are felt by the senses, and thus the senses are superior to all the gradations of matter.

Then there is the faculty of thinking or impulse: 'I want this, I don't want that.' But further, the faculty of judiciousness, reason or intelligence is superior: 'No, don't want that, it will produce a certain bad effect in you'; and so on. Even more subtle than the intelligence is *citta* (consciousness), which is not mentioned in

Gita; further is *ahankara* (ego), and finally the realm of soul.

Chapter 6 Perspectives on the Absolute

Devotee: The conditioned soul has some attraction to Lord Siva in *Mahesa Dhama*. What is Lord Siva's position?

Srila Guru Maharaj: His position is as a master of this *Maya*, Illusory Potency. He is not a slave of misunderstanding, although he remains in the relativity of misunderstanding. He remains in a masterly position. In his *Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam*, Srila Sanatana Goswami has explained that when one becomes liberated, Mayadevi comes to him, saying, "Why do you leave me? I would like to serve you, don't forsake me!" In this way, she again comes to offer her service to Siva, that is, the liberated soul. If he is enticed by that charm, he may again enter the mundane world, but if he has the attitude and *sraddha* within himself to deal indifferently, he neglects it and goes upwards: "No, I have my engagement, my duty. I have no time to satisfy anyone by accepting their service. I have my Lord, I must serve Him."

svadharmma-nisthah sata-janmabhih puman

virincatam eti tatah param hi mam

avyakrtam bhagavato 'tha vaisnavam

padam yathaham vibudhah kalatyaye

(Bhagavatam, 4.24.29)

Here, Mahadeva (Lord Siva) says that if one can perform his duty in *Varnasrama-dharma* (Godly socio-religious function) for one hundred consecutive births, he attains to the position of Lord Brahma. *Svadharmma* means prescribed duties according to the *Varnasrama-dharma* as sanctioned in the *Vedas* .

yatah pravrttir bhutanam yena sarvam idam tatam

svakarmana tam abhyarccya siddhim vindati manavah

(Bhagavad-gita, 18.46)

Also, in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* :

etavan sankhya-yogabhyam svadharma-parinisthaya

janma-labhah parah pumsam ante narayana-smrtih

(2.1.6)

Sankhya means *jnana* (enlightenment by knowledge and renunciation, up to *Brahman*); *yoga* means *astangadi yoga* (*yoga* meditation on *Paramatman* ,headed by the eight-fold system); and *svadharma-nistha* means *nikama-karma-yoga* (unselfish duty) in *Varnasrama* . *Etavan* means, 'they can lead us so far,' that is, up to liberation. Then, *janma-labhah parah pumsam ante narayana-smrtih* :we must attain the fulfillment of our life in the Service of Narayana, through *sraddha*, from a *Guru*. This is the positive attainment, like a visa; and the first three classes are comparable to a passport: the *yoga* system, progressing towards the conception of *Paramatman* ; *Varnasrama-dharma*, or executing our duties in this world because the *Vedas* have recommended this for our good, but at the same time we must not want anything in return (*niskama*); and also, *sankhya - jnana*, the process of *neti , neti , neti*,or 'this is not, this is not, this is not,' (*na iti*) - this is all gross, this is all gross, this is all gross. I am soul, I am consciousness, I am spirit - the process of elimination. Perfection in one of these three methods may be compared to gaining a passport. But *janma-labhah* , the real fulfillment of life, is *ante-narayana-smrtih* - the memory or consciousness of Narayana, after death. Narayana consciousness, Krsna consciousness, can give us proper fulfillment, and that is the visa to the *Svarupa-sakti* Realm (the Plane of Krsna's Divine Potency). Is this clear?

Devotee: Yes. But sometimes it is said that Mahesa Dhama is spiritual; it seems to be more like a marginal plane.

Srila Guru Maharaj: It is spiritual. Mahesa Dhama is of two kinds: first in the relativity of *Maya* , and secondly, Siva exists as Sadasiva, the devotee Siva. He may be entangled as a *grhastha* , but he can conceive that he has his superior position in a superior realm, and he holds the lowest position in that sphere. So, as I quoted, one who can successfully discharge his duty in the *Varnasrama* system for a hundred lifetimes attains to the position of Lord Brahma, who is the leader of the whole *Varnasrama* system in this world. Then, Mahadeva says *tatah param hi mam* : "After this, if he can continue in this way, he progresses even

further: he comes to my position."

In the relativity of this universe, Lord Brahma is the creator and manager. His position is somewhat like a prime minister, but Lord Siva's position is like that of a king. He can even dismiss the prime minister and dissolve the parliament. His position is higher, but he describes himself as *avyakrtam*: "I have some limitation; I am a little indifferent."

A-vi-akrtam means 'not well-specified,' or 'sometimes non-differentiated, with *tyaga* or *vairagya* .' Thus, he says, "Renunciation and abnegation are found to be predominant in me."

"Then, above me there is another realm which is inhabited by the *Bhagavata* , the followers of Bhagavan: it is they who attain to *Vaisnava-pada* or the Plane of Vaikuntha." *Yathaham vibudhah kalatyaye*: "And when the universal dissolution is ordered, at that time I and other ruling demigods can also get release and join them. Everyone may have that chance if they move properly. O gods, this is the situation." Mahadeva said this, as mentioned in the Bhagavatam.

A clear perspective of reality

We must reach an ontological conception of what is what. The measure of exploitation, renunciation and devotion. Devotion is divided into Scriptural Devotion and Loving Devotion. In this world, exploitation may be regulated work, karma, and uncivilized or non-regulated work, *vikarma*. Then there is *jnana*, *yoga*, *sankhya*, *vedanta*, and so on.

Brahma has his peculiar position, then there is Siva as the master of Maya, and Siva as the servant of Visnu, Narayana. Above that is Vaikuntha, and then Goloka.

One should have some conception, as with consulting a map. 'Here is America, here is Australia, here is Japan, east, west, etc.' If traveling by ship, a map and so many references show the path. Also, practical knowledge is more reliable than theoretical emblems: 'Yes, this beacon and landmark verify that we have reached the Indian Ocean.' Practical application is superior to mere theory. *Sabde pare canisnatam*: a *Guru* of theoretical knowledge cannot help us. One who has practical experience of the way is reliable, and able to save us and give us the real position.

Devotee: Does a *jiva* attain the position of Siva?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, he can be 'Siva,' when he is out of the clutches of Maya; and the Vaikuntha devotee is more than Siva. When a spiritual molecule is free from the clutches of the exploitation tendency, he is known as 'Siva.'

Pasa-baddho bhaved jivah pasa-muktah sadasivah: When he is entangled, he is 'jiva,' and when he is free, he is 'Siva' (*Sivo 'ham*) . But Krsna said, when giving His blessings to Uddhava (Bhagavatam, 11.14.15):

na tatha me priyatama atmayonir na sankarah

na ca sankarsano na srir naivatma ca yatha bhavan

"Neither Brahma nor Siva are as dear to Me as you; My elder brother Sankarsana is not as dear to Me as you, nor even Laksmi Devi. Even My own Self is not as dear to Me as you."

Such is the position of a devotee, a bhakta. He's above Brahma, he's above Siva, he's above Sankarsana, he's above Laksmi - he's above Krsna Himself, by the free, sweet will of Krsna. *Aham bhakta-paradhinah* .

This is running in the current of love, not of justice: through affection.

As in India, in the physical sense or in the sense of law, we find that the husband is master of the wife. But it may be that through affection the wife is the guide of the husband. Through affection, it is possible. This is another line of love, and no matter of right. So when the Lord says, "You are more than My own life", it is not a false statement. "My devotee is dearer to Me than Myself. If any danger comes to him, I must stand in front. First finish Me, and then try to touch My son, My devotee!" This is the attitude of the Lord. If any danger comes to the son, the father will come forth. "Oh no, first finish me, then try to harm my son!" It is the way of affection, and that is our solace.

Take the Road of Divine Aspiration

So Mahaprabhu says, "O *jiva*, take that direction. Try to purchase a ticket to that department. Go through *sraddha*, faith and devotion, and you will be a real gainer.

Further, Uddhava says about the Gopis, "I aspire to be a creeper or a shrub in

Vrndavana, so that I can have the feet-dust of these Divine Damsels on my head." In His magnanimity, Mahaprabhu offered such great things to us. He is none other than Krsna, because no one can give such a right to anyone and everyone without being Krsna Himself.

Therefore the devotees say that He is none other than Krsna Himself, and more - Radha and Krsna combined, because He gives the highest wealth of both. Only both combined as Dayal Gauranga are entitled to give this chance to the ordinary soul.

This is inconceivable. *Anarpita-carim cirat karuna-yavatirnah kalau*: Sri Gaurangadev descended in this Kali-yuga to give what had never been given before. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "What a great loss I am incurring, neglecting this chance! To whom should I tell it, and who will believe that I am consciously missing such a great chance? Who should I tell about my disastrous misfortune?"

durllabha manava janma labhiya samsare

krsna na bhajinu duhkha kahiba kahare?

To whom should I divulge my heart? Who will care to give me

audience? Such a great chance I am trampling under my feet - I have attained this human birth, and I have just come into the vicinity of the greatest fortune, and I neglect it?"

Nine petals of the Lotus

Devotee: We have heard that the nine islands of Nabadwip represent the nine fundamental processes of Devotional Service.

Srila Guru Maharaj: The Holy Sri Nabadwip Dhama (lit. Navadvipa) is envisaged as a lotus flower. The center of the lotus is the Birthplace of Mahaprabhu and it represents *atma-nivedanam* or self-surrender. One has to first surrender, and then all the practices of Devotion follow. The petals of the lotus represent *sravanam* , *kirtanam* , *smaranam* , *padasevanam* , *arcanam* , *vandanam* , and *dasyam* (hearing, chanting, remembering, serving the Lord's Feet, worship, prayer, and servitorship).

Sakhyam (friendship) is situated half on one side of the Ganges and half on the other. In this way, the nine islands of Nabadwip are represented as a lotus flower embodying the Nine Standard Practices of Devotion.

Devotee: It is said that Krsna appears once in a day of Brahma. How often does Mahaprabhu appear?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Although every Kali-yuga He appears to spread *Nama-sankirtana* , and every *Dvapara-yuga* Krsna also comes, those are partial representations and not *Svayam Bhagavan* (the Supreme Lord in Person). The *Yugavataras* or Descents for certain ages, are not *Svayam Bhagavan* . *Svayam Bhagavan* comes only once in the day of Brahma, and so Mahaprabhu as Radha and Govinda combined (*Radha-Govinda-milita-tanu*) also appears only once in a day of Brahma, in Nabadwip. In all other *Dvapara* and Kali-yugas ordinary *Krshnavataras* and *Gauravataras* appear, only to preach general worship (*paricarya*) and general *Nama-sankirtana* , as mentioned in the *Bhagavatam* (*dvapare paricaryayam kalau tad hari-kirtanat*) .

Devotee: Maharaj, I have a question: in the *Navadvipa-bhava-taranga* by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, he seems to be having actual visions of Pastimes of the Lord on the various islands of Nabadwip; yet he writes in such a way that he also seems to be aspiring for those visions. Is he actually having those visions?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, of course. His vision is inspired. The *Dhama* has inspired these two perspectives in him. The *Dhama* allows us to see it, according to the degree of our devotion. A doctor sees a patient according to his capacity. Higher intelligence can see deeper. Such is the case always. A higher politician can see a higher strategy, and so on.

ya nisa sarva-bhutanam tasyam jagartti samyami yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh

(Bhagavad-gita, 2.69)

"The detached, self-realized soul remains awake in the night of all beings, and the world of exploitation that all beings awaken in is similarly his night."

A detector can see the depth afforded by its capacity. The X-ray can detect to a certain depth, the microscope has another dimension of utility.

There is revelation according to one's capacity. Deserve - and have.

mallanam asanir nrrnam naravarah

strinam smaro murttiman

gopanam svajano 'satam ksitibhujam

sasta svapitro sisuh

mrtyur bhojapater virad avidusam

tattvam param yoginam

vrsninam paradevateti

vidito rangam gatah sagrajah

(Bhagatavam, 10.43.17)

"O King, Sri Krsna then appeared as a thunderbolt to the wrestlers, as the supreme male to the men; as Cupid incarnate to the ladies, as a friend to the cowherdsmen; as an emperor to the wicked kings, as a child to His father and mother; as death to Kamsa, as the universal form of the world to the ignorant; as the Supreme Truth to the yogis, as the Supreme Worshipful Lord to the Vrsnis - and along with Baladev He entered the arena."

When Krsna entered the arena, all the different categories of persons had different perspectives of Him, according to their inner eye. Experience of the truth must vary according to different attitudes or degrees of consciousness, and this is applicable everywhere.

Divine Sound

Devotee: Sometimes when traveling, we keep *japa-mala* beads with us and chant quietly. Is this proper?

Srila Guru Maharaj: You may do so, there's no fault. Others may inquire, "Why are you doing this? What makes you chant this Name?"

But if you are afraid that you won't be able to give them a proper explanation

[laughter], you may chant within. Still, of course, you may say, "I have such faith, and so I am doing this. Through the medium of sound I can go to the truth. Sound is the medium utilized every where for every case, and here also, why shouldn't sound be the medium? Through the medium of sound, my mind wants to reach the place of origin of the sound vibration.

"The one who must reach the origin is more subtle than sound. Sound in the ordinary sense is a very gross thing compared to the *atma*, the soul.

But this sound is *Vaikuntha-sabda*, which is far more subtle than ordinary sound. It possesses more efficacy, and my sound is a gross thing in comparison to it. When it touches my ear, I can find that it is very subtle, and I am gross, considering myself a bundle of material things around the spiritual existence.

"When this body will no longer exist, that sound will continue. It is undying. Its origin is Goloka, Vrndavana, the finest plane ever known to the world. The finest of the finest planes ever known.

"We know of an electrical plane, an ethereal plane, but there is finer and finer. So the finest element ever known to the world is the layer of beauty and sweetness and love. That is the most original conception of existence ever known to any consciousness. That is universal."

The perspective of Love

Love means sacrifice. If they know the real meaning of love, none can say, 'I don't want love.' Anyone may say, 'I don't want power; I may misuse it.' To be in possession of power is a great responsibility. Love is also a responsibility, but it is unavoidable. We want love, from the higher - shelter in the loving lap, in the loving consideration. We want to enter a domain where everyone will love us. A home. Home is sweet.

Why? Because everyone there has some attraction and love, some blessing over us. Home is so sweet. All-favorable, all-loving, all-trustworthy. So we want to go back to home; home, sweet, sweet home.

Svarupe sabara haya, golokete sthiti. Muktir hitvanyatha-rupam svarupena vyavasthithi. Mukti is self-determination; the stage of self-determination, as much as our self can determine; our utmost interest.

That is home, that is Goloka, that is the Plane of Krsna.

The most attractive sound is the sound of His flute. Srila Rupa Goswami has given a description:

rundhann ambubhrtas camatkrti-param

kurvan muhus tumburum

dhyana antarayan sanandana-mukhan

vismapayan vedhasam

outsukyavalibhir balim catulayan

bhogindram aghurnayan

bhindann anda-kataha-bhittim abhito

babhrama vamsi-dhvanih

"Arresting the movement of the clouds, astonishing the Gandharvas headed by Tumburu and breaking the meditation of the sages headed by Sanandana; astonishing the heart of Lord Brahma, distracting the mind of the indomitable Baliraja with intense ecstasies, reeling the head of Ananta, the Serpent King who supports the earth planet, and piercing the covering of the universe - the vibration of Krsna's flute wandered all around."

The sound of Krsna's flute began to reverberate. When that sound entered the ear of Brahma, he became bewildered: "Oh, what can this mean, and from where is it coming? What is this? It's puzzling me!"

Then the Infinite Anantadev who keeps unlimited universes on His lap - His head began to reel. The Total Force who supports all these Brahmandas, so many lustrous masses - the intense vibration causes even His head to reel. It attacks the heart of Radharani and the *sakhas* (friends); and the cows are also with their ears perked up, inquiring, "In which direction are we wanted to go?"

Chapter 7 A Holy Day

1. The Appearance of Srimati Visnupriya Devi

Today is the Holy Day of *Vasanta-pancami* (the fifth day of the light fortnight of the moon, month of Magh, when Krsna is worshiped with the new flowers of spring. On this day, the holy advent of Srimati Visnupriya Devi occurred. Her father was Sri Sanatana Misra of Nabadwip, who was a *Brahmana* and great devotee of Lord Visnu.

Srimati Visnupriya Devi is the Eternal Consort of Sri Gaurasundar in His feature of Gaura-Narayana, and according to *Sri-Gauraganoddesa-dipika* she is directly Satyabhama in Krsna's *Dvaraka-lila*.

She was the second wife of Sriman Mahaprabhu in the householder period of His Pastimes. From childhood, she was devout in the Divine Service of the Supreme Lord. Kasinatha Pandit was the intermediary in Her marriage to Mahaprabhu. She was the ideal of Divine Self-surrender at the Lotus Feet of Mahaprabhu. When she was only fourteen, Mahaprabhu took *sannyasa*, and after that she lived the rest of Her life in penance. From early morning she would take the Holy Name the whole day, and for every *Mahamantra* that she chanted, she would put one grain of rice into a clay pot. After chanting her quota, she would take that rice and cook it and offer it to the Lord. That was all she would take for her subsistence, so gradually she became emaciated. She passed her days in this way.

Her brother was her guardian after Saci-devi departed, and ultimately she had a *Sri-Murti* (Deity) of Mahaprabhu, and she would worship Him in that Form. And since the time of Visnupriya, that worship is being continued up to the present in the Temple here in Nabadwip known as 'Mahaprabhura Badi' (the Home of Mahaprabhu). So this day of the year is connected with her holy memory, and we may achieve her Grace if we honor this time in her name, discussing her Pastimes. She will be propitiated and Sri Chaitanyadev will also be pleased with us, giving us a step forward in our transcendental march towards Him.

2. The Appearance of Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi

Today is also the appearance day of Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi. He is considered to be Vrsabhanuraja of Varsana, Vrndavana, the father of Srimati Radharani. Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi was born in a Brahmana family at Chattagram, and he bore the title 'Vidyanidhi' on account of his scholarship. Apparently he was a

man of luxurious habits. In those days, people who could afford it would have a house in Nabadwip on the banks of the holy Ganges river; they would from time to time visit Nabadwip to regularly bathe in the Ganges and remain for some time in this Holy Place, and then return to their homes to continue their livelihood. So, Pundarika Vidyanidhi also had a house in Nabadwip.

Here, in *Gaura-lila*, Gadadhara Pandit was the Representation of Srimati Radharani Herself. At that time, Gadadhara Pandit was a young boy. He was younger than Mahaprabhu. Mukunda Datta was a follower and admirer of Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanyadev, and he also came from

Chattagram, the village of Pundarika Vidyanidhi. He knew Pundarika Vidyanidhi to be a man of higher religious type, that is, a *Bhagavata* type or Krsna-bhakta. But outwardly Pundarika Vidyanidhi lived a life of luxury. He was a well-to-do man, a general *zamindar* (state landowner).

Mukunda Datta naturally knew him when he came to Nabadwip, since he hailed from the same place. Mukunda Datta went to Gadadhara Pandit and asked him, "Would you like to have the *darsana* of a Vaisnava?"

From childhood Gadadhara Pandit was very fond of Vaisnavas and *Krsna-nama*. He had much fondness for Nimai Pandit, when the Lord returned from Gaya. Previously he was very much afraid of Nimai Pandit, because whenever They met, Nimai Pandit would always tackle him with some apparent quarrel about etymology or something of that nature. So, after returning from Gaya, when Sri Chaitanyadev expressed His Devotional Aspect, He said one day, "Gadadhara, from your very childhood you are a devotee of Krsna, and My days have been wasted discussing grammar and mundane literature. But you, Gadadhara, My friend - your life is very successful. You have fulfillment of life. From the beginning you are fond of *Krsna-nama*." So, from the beginning Gadadhara Pandit's heart was towards Krsna. Therefore when Mukunda Datta asked him, "Would you like to see a Vaisnava who has come from afar?" the reply came, "Yes, yes, I shall go; take me there."

So Mukunda Datta took Gadadhara Pandit to Pundarika Vidyanidhi. And what kind of Vaisnava was Pundarika Vidyanidhi? He was sitting on a luxurious bedstead, smoking a very ornate and valuable pipe. His head was adorned with beautiful oiled curly locks, and many valuable pastes were anointed on his body. Two attendants fanned him on either side.

Gadadhara Pandit thought, "Mukunda has brought me to this luxury-loving man sitting on the bedstead and smoking? What type of Vaisnava has he brought me to see?" He was disappointed at heart, and Mukunda could guess it. Mukunda Datta was a very good singer, and in a very sweet tone he sang this *sloka* of *Bhagavatam* : *aho baki yam stana-kala-kutam*

jighamsayapayayad apy asadhvi

lebhe gatim dhatry ucitam tato 'nyam

kam va dayalum saranam vrajema

This sloka was chanted by Mukunda in a very sweet tone, and this created a wonderful effect in Pundarika Vidyanidhi. The *Bhagavatam* says, "Who else but Krsna should we approach? Who can be so kind, so gracious? There is limitless Grace in Him. Why? Baki - Putana, came to kill Him in a treacherous way, taking the garb of *dhatri* , a motherly garb. In this way she came to try and kill Him; yet Krsna gave her a position as a nursemaid in His group of assisting mothers. So gracious is the Lord. Who else can we approach for our good?"

This is the meaning of the verse. "She painted deadly poison on her breast, and came to suckle the boy Krsna. So treacherous was her action.

In the garb of motherly affection she tried to murder the boy, and she was given such a high position as an attendant of His mother. She was elevated to the motherly group. Such Grace, such Mercy He showed, without considering or passing judgment on the worth of that action. So other than that kind-hearted and gracious Krsna, where else should we go for shelter?"

This entered the heart of Pundarika Vidyanidhi and began to vibrate, and produced such force that he was stunned; then shivering began, and madly gesticulating, he began to pull his hair and tear his silken dress, kicking over the tobacco and pipe. His rich bedding and dress were ruined, and he began to roll on the ground and cry, *kam va dayalum saranam vrajema* - "In whom shall we take shelter other than Him?"

Then Gadadhara Pandit thought, "Oh, I have committed a great offense in my mind, thinking that he was not a Vaisnava, because of his fashionable dress and style. Really, how great a Vaisnava he is - what a wonderful effect the memory of Krsna caused in him!"

Then Gadadhara Pandit revealed his mind.

"Mukunda, I have committed offense against this great Vaisnava. What will be my fate? When I first saw him, I shunned him; I committed offense. I think that if I take *mantra* from him - become his disciple then he may forgive all my offenses. There is no other way to be absolved from this *Vaisnava-aparadha*. I shall have to inform my Lord Gauracandra, Nimai Pandit, about this." So they left the place of Pundarika Vidyanidhi, and Gadadhara went to take Nimai Pandit's permission to become the disciple of Pundarika Vidyanidhi.

Before anyone knew that Pundarika had come from Chattagram to Nabadwip, and even before Mahaprabhu had met him, Mahaprabhu was seen to suddenly cry, " *Bap Pundarik! Bap Pundarik!* " In the mood of Srimati Radharani, Nimai was taking his name. *Bap* means 'father.' So He was calling, "Father, Pundarika! Father, Pundarika!" Nimai Pandit was chanting like this, in the mood of Radharani.

When Gadadhara made his proposal to Mahaprabhu, the Lord immediately replied, "Yes, very good proposal. Go and accept him at once." Gadadhara Pandit represents Radharani in *Gaura-lila*, and Pundarika is Radharani's father in *Krsna-lila* : the *Guru* is like the father, and the disciple is like the child. So Mahaprabhu at once approved and Gadadhara took initiation from Pundarika Vidyanidhi. He was none other than Vrsabhanuraja, and Gadadhara was the incarnation of Radharani in *Gaura-lila*.

Pundarika Vidyanidhi would not take bath in the Ganges because he could not tolerate that his feet would touch the holy Ganges river. Before daybreak, he would go to the Ganges and take some of the water on his head. He did not go to the Ganges by day, because he could not tolerate to see persons who would dive into the water or spit there and contaminate the pure, holy water by misusing it. Before worship, prayer, etc., the general *pandit* section may bathe in the Ganges and fast to purify their bodies of sin. But Pundarika Vidyanidhi would rather drink some Ganges water prior to his daily worship and duties, thereby teaching us the proper worshipful respect due to the Ganga.

In Puri, his dearest friend and associate was Sri Svarupa Damodara.

When he went to Puri, he felt some pain in his heart that the priestly servants of Lord Jagannatha dressed the Lord in starched cloth, which is generally

considered impure. When cloth is manufactured by hand loom, the thread is soaked in boiled rice water which acts as a paste to hold it firm in the loom. That cloth is considered impure, and must first be rinsed in water before offering it to the Deity. But in Puri, that was not the practice. They directly used starched cloth for dressing Lord Jagannatha, and Pundarika Vidyanidhi could not accommodate this.

That night, he dreamt that both Jagannatha and Balarama came to him and dealt slaps to his cheeks, saying, "You have come here to point out the defects in My servitors? What is this!"

They both began to slap him, and the dream was so intense that when he rose in the morning he found that both his cheeks were inflamed. He expressed to his most intimate friend, Svarupa Damodara: "My dear friend, Svarupa Damodara, such is my position. I had this objectionable feeling my heart towards these servitors, so Jagannatha and Balarama have punished me in this way. See the swelling on both cheeks!"

Such was the nature of Pundarika Vidyanidhi. In essence, we are told that he is the father of Srimati Radharani, incarnated here as Pundarika Vidyanidhi. A slight holy association of this day, his appearance day, will help us a great deal in our advancement of spiritual life.

3. The Appearance of Sri Raghunandana Thakura

Thirdly, this is also the birthday of Raghunandana Thakura. He was born in a place named Srikhanda, near Katwa, in a Kaviraj family, a lineage of Ayurvedic doctors. Raghunandana was the son of Mukunda Kaviraja, who was such a notable doctor that even kings called for him for treatment. Raghunandana was a bachelor his whole life. His figure was extraordinarily beautiful, and he was very fond of dancing. From the beginning he was, of course, a natural devotee.

The family of Mukunda Thakura worshiped their ancestral Deity at home. Once, when Raghunandana was a growing boy, who had perhaps only recently received the sacred thread and admission to worship, his father asked him, "I'm going out and won't return in time. You please worship the Deity and feed Him - offer *bhogam* for His food." His expression was, "Please try to feed my Deity."

When he was away, Raghunandana's mother cooked many items and brought them to the temple, and asked Raghunandana to offer them to the Deity. Generally the doors are kept closed during worship, so behind the closed doors Raghunandana offered and prayed to the Lord,

"Please take these dishes I am offering You - please eat."

But the *Sri Murti* did not answer or come forward to eat. Raghunandana began to

cry.

"My father will rebuke me! He has requested me to feed You, and You are not eating. I'll be punished. You have to take this food!"

The sincere boy began to cry in such a way that Krsna had to eat. Raghunandana was satisfied, and came out from the Deity room. His mother came to remove the Prasadam.

"What is this? All the plates are empty!"

Raghunandana replied,

"You asked me to feed the Deity. He has taken."

His mother said angrily,

"You, boy, you have eaten it! The Deity doesn't eat. We offer, everything remains, and afterwards we take the *Prasadam* . You wicked boy, you have turned out to be such a rogue - you have eaten everything."

"No, no, I did not eat, the Deity ate everything."

"This is impossible, you foolish boy! Do you want to make a fool of me?"

This can never happen!"

He began to cry.

"No, I'm speaking the truth."

"All right, let your father come, and I shall ask him to punish you.

Mukunda returned, and Raghunandana's mother complained,

"Your boy has grown to be such a rogue! He says the Deity has eaten."

Raghunandana also petitioned his father,

"Yes, the Deity has eaten. He would not take in the beginning, but I began to cry, and then He ate."

"Is this true?"

"Yes, it is true my father, I am not lying."

"Can you show me?"

"I shall try."

So he was given another chance to worship, and from a hidden place his father could see that the Deity had actually taken the food.

Such a devotee was Raghunandana Thakura. When he danced in *Sankirtana*, it was such a charming scene that even Mahaprabhu was attracted. During the Jagannatha *Rathayatra* seven special groups would chant and dance, and in the party from Srikhanda we find that Raghunandana was the dancer.

So today is the day connected with the memory of Sri Raghunandana Thakura, who is considered to be Pradyumna *Avatara* . Many more incidents occur in his pastimes - I have only touched on them. It is also said that near the banks of the lake Madhu-puskarini there is a Jambu tree, and according to his wish two Kadamba flowers bloom on that tree every day for the worship of his Deity. Many miracles are found in his pastimes.

4 The Appearance of Sri Raghunatha Dasa Goswami

Then, the fourth personality is Sri Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. He was born nearly five hundred years ago in Krsnapur village, Hooghly District. He came in the Kayastha caste. His father, Hiranya Majumdar, was a very rich man. His father had one brother, Govardhana, but Raghunatha was the only child. His father and uncle were state landowners. At that time, they collected 20 lakhs (2,000,000) rupees in taxes. 12 lakhs was to be paid to the king, and their net income was 8 lakhs.

Raghunatha heard about Mahaprabhu after His *sannyasa*. Hiranya and Govardhana had association with Advaita Acarya, and they used to make an annual contribution to all the superior Sanskrit scholars and their schools, in Bengal, of the time.

When Mahaprabhu went back to Sri Advaita Acarya's house (Advaita-bhavan) after His *sannyasa* , Raghunatha Dasa came and saw Him, and became mad with

Love of Krsna. His heart was completely melted by Mahaprabhu's beauty and charming Personality, His Devotion and His Teachings of Devotion for Krsna. Mahaprabhu Himself was also aware of this. Raghunatha would not leave Mahaprabhu, but the Lord told him,

"Go home. Don't be over-enthusiastic; control yourself. Keep your Divine Love for Krsna within your heart, and don't express it outwardly.

Don't advertise it. Very soon the time will come when Krsna will guide you. He will make a way for you. Don't allow any external show but keep it within your heart."

sthira hanya ghare yao, na hao batula

krame krame paya loka bhava-sindhu-kula

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 16.237)

"Compose yourself and go home - don't be a madman. One reaches the shore of the material ocean gradually."

Then, he later came into the association of Nityananda Prabhu in Panihati. Nityananda Prabhu said to him, "Give a feast here for My followers. You are the son of a rich man, so manage to give a feast here for My followers."

Raghunatha did so, and Nityananda Prabhu was very satisfied. He also blessed him, saying, "Very soon your bright day will come." And He addressed His devotees, "See this young boy - he has immense wealth; in abundance he has everything required for a young man's enjoyment, but he does not care for it. Krsna's Grace has come down into his heart, so he does not care for anything of this world; but he's mad to leave his home of material grandeur and become a street beggar. He has become mad for Krsna. Just see this high ideal - devotion, attraction. Love of Krsna has made him mad. He is very, very fortunate. This royal dignity and prosperity cannot please him."

Anyway, he returned home. But one day Hiranya and the others noticed that he no longer entered the inner section of the house. He began to stay in the outer section only. His father and other guardians thought that his condition had become very grave, so ten men were engaged to keep guard that he may not leave.

One day in the early morning before sunrise, the family *Guru*, Yadunandana Acarya, suddenly entered the house. Finding Raghunatha in the outer section of the house, he met him and requested him, "I am going out for some important business, but there is no one to worship my Deity. So please ask one Brahmana disciple in my name to serve the Deity for a day or two during my absence." As Yadunandana Acarya left, Raghunatha went with him. The guards saw him going with the family *Guru*, so they did not interfere. On the way, Raghunatha requested the *Guru*, "You may go ahead with your business, and I shall request the gentleman to do the worship in your absence."

The *Guru* left. Raghunatha took advantage of the situation. Perhaps he requested that man to do the service, but he started off in the direction away from Puri. He knew that as soon as they realized at home that he wasn't returning, they would send men to search for him on the way to Puri. So for the whole day he walked in the opposite direction. In the evening he stopped at a cowherdsman's house, took a little milk from him and passed the night in the cowshed. Then in the morning he started for Puri.

When his guardians found that Raghunatha had not returned home, they heard from the guards that he had gone with the family *Guru*. They went to the *Guru's* house, but Raghunatha was not to be found. Then they thought that he must have left for Puri, and they sent ten men to that side.

They returned without finding him. In this way, Raghunatha cleverly managed to escape. For twelve days he walked to Puri, taking food here and there for only three of those days. On the other days no food was necessary. He was helped by Divine Love, surcharged.

He had already heard that Mahaprabhu was at the Gambhira, the Kasi Misra Bhavan. He went there, and in the courtyard fell flat in obeisance unto Mahaprabhu.

Mukunda Datta announced to the Lord, "Raghunatha has come."

Mahaprabhu said, "Yes, look after him. He has come with great difficulty, walking and walking without food. Take care of him for a few days. Then, he will manage for himself."

That was the direction of Mahaprabhu. For a few days Raghunatha took Prasadam there. After that he began to beg at the gate of the Jagannatha Temple.

The parents now thought it was impossible to bring him back, and they did not make any further attempt. But they sent some money with one *Brahmana* and two servants, instructing them to hire a house and offer Raghunatha a place to stay, and see that their son may not die without food. They tried their best, but Raghunatha continued to subsist on alms.

Over a period of two years, Raghunatha invited Mahaprabhu to take *Prasadam* at that house, and the Lord did so for his satisfaction. After that, Raghunatha left that idea, thinking, "This is only to produce some name and fame for me. Mahaprabhu is not pleased with such *Prasadam*."

Svarupa Damodara was the dearmost Attendant of Mahaprabhu, and a very good scholar as well. Raghunatha was also a scholar - we find that later he left the world beautiful poetry in Sanskrit. Mahaprabhu gave Raghunatha over to the charge of Svarupa Damodara, saying, "I request Svarupa Damodara to take your charge, and he will advise you what will be necessary for your devotional life."

But suddenly one day, Raghunatha approached Mahaprabhu:

"Why have You managed to take me out of my house, and what is my best benefit? If You please tell me in Your own words, my heart will be satisfied."

Mahaprabhu said,

"I have given you over to the charge of Svarupa Damodara. He is more qualified than even Myself. Still, if you want to hear something directly from Me, then I say in brief:

gramya-katha na sunibe, gramya-varta na kahibe

bhala na khaibe ara bhala na paribe

amani manada hanya krsna-nama sada la'be

vraje radha-krsna seva manase karibe

"Don't indulge in worldly talk, don't hear worldly talk. Try your best to avoid mundane matters. Don't eat delicious dishes, but take whatever ordinary food may come of its own accord; and don't dress luxuriously.

Always try to take the Name of Krsna with the attitude of giving respect to others, without expecting respect from anyone. Be humble, but never aspire after respectful dealings from others. In this way, try to take the Name of Krsna constantly. And within, try to serve Sri Sri Radha-Krsna in Vrndavana. Mentally, be in Vrndavana rendering Service to *Sri Sri Radha-Krsna-lila*."

Mahaprabhu told Raghunatha that this was the essence of His advice to him. Then, He again took Raghunatha's hand and offered it to the hand of Svarupa Damodara. He said, "I am giving you to the charge of Svarupa Damodara. He is the best Spiritual Teacher. He will take care of you."

After Raghunatha's arrival in Puri, Mahaprabhu stayed there continuously for sixteen years. After that, Mahaprabhu departed from the world. Raghunatha left Puri and went to Vrndavana, thinking, "I have what is to be had; now I only want to see Vrndavana Dhama once, and then I shall leave this body by jumping from the highest peak of Govardhana." With this idea he went to Vrndavana, but there he came into contact with Sanatana Goswami and Rupa Goswami - he found the beginning of a new life. He thought, "What is this? Mahaprabhu has not departed - He is living in them."

Mahaprabhu delegated Rupa and Sanatana with the power to preserve the Devotional Current they had received from Him, and to present it in a new light. They were asked to prove by drawing upon different Scriptures that Mahaprabhu's Teachings are the very gist and purpose of all the Scriptures. As in *Bhagavad-gita*, *vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*: "The attempt of every Revealed Scripture is to show Me as the Highest Center - I am the Absolute." So Mahaprabhu said, "Krsna is the Absolute. With the help of the different Scriptures and historical reference - by all means possible - try to prove that Krsna is Svayam Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that *Vraja-lila*, Vrndavana-lila, is the highest achievement."

The two brothers had already begun that work when Raghunatha came into their association, and he found, "Oh! Mahaprabhu is here." He abandoned the idea of leaving this world, and joined Rupa and Sanatana as their disciple. Mahaprabhu had already ordered Sanatana Goswami, "My followers are very poor and helpless. You'll have to look after them whenever they come to Vrndavana. You'll have to be the caretaker of all my disciples that come to Vrndavana." So Raghunatha came to Sanatana Goswami, and Sanatana took care of him.

Raghunatha was so self-forgetful that one day as he was sitting on the banks of Radha-kunda and taking the Name, a tiger came just beside him to drink water, but Raghunatha paid no attention. Suddenly, Sanatana Goswami came upon the scene. He was astonished. Up until then Raghunatha had lived under the shade of a tree, but Sanatana said, "Please construct a hut to live in. Don't disregard my request - I entreat you to do this." Then from that time he managed to construct a small dwelling and stay there. His abnegation, *vairagya*, was incomparable.

Sanatana, Rupa, and all the Goswamis' indifference to worldly enjoyment was extreme, but Raghunatha's abnegation surpassed all.

When he was in Puri, sometimes he would beg *Prasadam* at the gate of the Jagannatha Temple, and sometimes he would take *Prasadam* at a *chatram* or free kitchen where rich men distribute *Prasadam* for beggars. But then he thought, "I am taking what is due to others' *karma*."

The unsold Jagannatha *Prasadam* is given to the cows of Jagannatha Puri. But when it becomes so stale that it emits a bad odor, even the cows cannot eat it. So now Raghunatha would wash that *Prasadam* with sufficient water, and adding a little salt he would eat that. Mahaprabhu heard about this, and one day when Raghunatha was taking that *Prasadam* Mahaprabhu approached and suddenly took some and ate it.

He said, "Oh! I have tasted many times the *Prasadam* of Jagannatha, but such sweet *Prasadam* I have never taken anywhere!"

So, what is the taste in *Prasadam*? It is not mundane. Raghunatha had such intense faith in *Prasadam* that he lived on apparently rotten things with a little salt - and he was the son of a family of kingly opulence. So much indifference was in him. And in his last days in Vrndavana, he would pass each day taking only a pot of *ghol*, buttermilk. This is not possible for a man of flesh and blood. Great souls like the Goswamis are really personalities come down from the other world, and so it was possible for them to show the ideal of abnegation. It is not possible for ordinary humans of flesh and blood to observe such a degree of abnegation without dying. But the Goswamis created the standard and ideal by such *vairagya*. At the same time, Raghunatha studied Rupa Goswami's presentation of the highest type of *Rasa* or Devotional Sentiment - *Madhura-rasa*.

The Acme of Divine Service

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami appreciated the acme of Divine

Service, the culminating point of Divine Service, *Radha-dasya* , which is Servitude unto Srimati Radharani. Therefore he is called the *Prayojanacarya*. Srila Sanatana Goswami is generally conceived of by his successors as the *Acarya* of *Sambandha-jnana* . *Sambandha* refers to 'what is what' - 'what is my position in the spiritual hierarchy.' That was explained most clearly by Srila Sanatana Goswami. And *Abhidheya* - what we should cultivate in order to attain to our objective - was mainly given by Srila Rupa Goswami. He taught us how we can attain fulfillment of our life in the Domain of Love. And what is particularly the highest point of our attainment, or *Prayojana* , was very vividly shown by Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. In his famous sloka he says:

asabharair amrta-sindhumayaih kathancit

kalo mayatigamitah kila sampratam hi

tvan cet krpam mayi vidhasyasi naiva kim me

pranair vraje na ca baroru bakarinapi

This sloka has given us the highest conception of our attainment in the school of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. What is that? Srila Raghunatha Goswami is addressing Srimati Radharani: "O Queen of my heart, for a long, long time I am waiting with great patience to have Your Mercy, which is so sweet to me that I cannot avoid it. It is heart-melting, heart-attracting, heart-crushing. It is so deeply touching me - I can't avoid Your Service Connection. Somehow I have managed to come such a long way, to endure such a long time, but I am impatient now. Be gracious; if You are not gracious upon me, I have got no hope. I will come to the end of my patience.

"My life will end here. So much so, that, what shall I do with this Vrndavana? Vrndavana is of no use to me! What is the utility of living my life? It is useless - it will end with no utility. I can't love even Vrndavana, which is associated with the *Lila* of Krsna. To say nothing of Vrndavana, I can't relish the company of even Krsna, without You.

Without You, even Krsna is meaningless to me. I can't tolerate, I can't relish

either my own life, or this environment, or even Krsna - if He Himself comes to grace me I can't relish that, without Your connection.

"So please be gracious upon me. You are all-in-all. Without You, Krsna consciousness is not Krsna consciousness. Your position is so great, so beautiful in *Krsna-lila* - You are the center of all the *Lila* of Krsna. Without You I can't conceive of any life worth living. I utterly surrender unto You, my Queen."

This is *Radha-dasya* . Our best fulfillment is in the Service of *Sri Radha*, because only She can fully attract the Grace of Krsna. She is the other Half who can draw the maximum *Rasa* , Ecstasy, from Krsna - in quantity as well as in quality. So those who are serving Srimati Radharani get the highest type of qualitative *Rasa* from Krsna in reciprocation for their Service. That cannot be had through any other channel. Service that comes through Srimati Radharani is of the highest quality, so Her Service should be our summum bonum of life.

This was announced clearly by Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami who is considered to be *Prayojanacarya* , the Guide to show us our highest fulfillment of life. By our association with this day and by our humble attempt to discuss all these matters, we may be benefited in the achievement of our goal. This is the day of the advent of such great personalities.

5. Departure of Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura

Today is also the day that Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura departed from this world. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura appeared about 180 years after the Advent of Sri Gaurangadev. He composed a commentary on *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and many other books to help the devotees coming later in the *Sampradaya* . He was such a great *Acarya*.

In his own special way, he has dealt elaborately with many spiritual matters, giving the proper approach. He was the *sastric* or Scriptural dispensation of Sri Rupa-Sanatana, etc. By his grace, Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana composed the *Sri Gaudiya Vaisnava* commentary on *Vedanta-sutra*, *Sri Govinda-bhasya* . From such great Masters there is much to be read.

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti was born in a Brahmana family in Devagram of Murshidabad district. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit. He came in the line of Sri Narottama Thakura. He gave us extensive Scriptural writings to help us very precisely and elaborately to know about the Pastimes of Mahaprabhu and Radha-

Krsna, Vrndavana, Nabadwip, and the *Guru-parampara* . The *Gurvastakam* we chant daily was written by him, as well as many other important works. Srila Rupa Goswami wrote *Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* , 'The Nectarine Ocean of Devotional Joy,' and Srila Visvanatha wrote *Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu-bindu* or a drop of that Ocean. And from Sri Rupa's *Sri-Ujjvala-nilamani*, 'The Brilliant Jewel of the Supernatural World,' or Krsna in *Madhura-rasa*, he gave *Ujjvala-nilamani-kirana* or a ray of that Jewel. In this way, he has given volumes of books and poems. As Sri Rupa Goswami gave the *Asta-kaliya-lila* of Krsna, or twenty-four hour Service engagement with Sri Sri Radha-Govinda, he has similarly given in *Caitanya-lila* twenty-four hour engagement in the Service of Sriman Mahaprabhu. So he has done great Service to the *Sampradaya* and profusely bestowed his mercy upon us.

5, 6. Departures of Srimad Bharati Maharaj and Srimad Parvat Maharaj

Today is also the disappearance day of two of our senior Godbrothers, *sannyasi* disciples of our Guru Maharaj, Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Viveka Bharati Maharaj and Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Svarupa Parvat Maharaj. They both preached extensively on the order of Srila Prabhupada. Sri Bharati Maharaj was very popular; his preaching style was very charming and engaging. In the beginning we appreciated his preaching very much.

Sri Parvat Maharaj was also among the earliest disciples of our Guru Maharaj. He was born at Svarupa Ganja, on the other side of the Ganges from here (Nabadwip). He was born in the house directly next to Surabhi Kunja where Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura lived for some time. During his childhood, he told me, he saw Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura chanting the Name. In the early morning Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura would chant the Hare Krsna *Mahamantra* just as one calling someone from a distance. A living thing - like one man calling another. In this way, in a living way, he was calling Krsna. He was in his old age, and his body was somewhat attacked with rheumatism. There was a cement chair constructed there; he would stroll about at his sweet will, and when he felt fatigued he would take his seat on that chair. That chair is still there today.

So, at a very early age, Srimad Parvat Maharaj came to Srila Prabhupada and accepted his shelter. For a long period he was posted as the caretaker at Bhakti Kutir, the then 'head office,' a small seaside house in Puri owned by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Then, when Prabhupada began his preaching life, Parvat Maharaj became a *sannyasi*. During the lifetime of Prabhupada he preached

throughout the whole of Bengal and beyond as well. He established a Math in Orissa.

I remember, once, when I was a newcomer in the Math, he was telling one gentleman about how he preached on the East side of Bengal. At that place, some people challenged him, "Why have you come to preach here? Don't you know that just nearby on the bank of the river there is a *siddha-mahatma*? He has attained the highest end of life. Have you seen him?"

He replied to them, "I have seen many *siddha*, like *aloo-siddha*, etc.!"

Siddha may mean 'perfected soul,' but another meaning of *siddha* is 'boiled.' So he was saying, "I've seen many *siddha* - boiled things. Boiled potatoes, boiled cabbage, etc. We already have so many boiled things!"

They said,

„What are you saying? You are insulting him."

He replied,

"This is no insult. Those who are full of all those *siddhas* - they know nothing. What Mahaprabhu has brought us is the highest. All other proposals are trash and nasty things. We have come from a great

Mahatma to carry to you the highest objective, the summum bonum of life - accept Mahaprabhu and *Bhagavatam* . We hate all those ' *siddha* ' impostors who are deceiving the people in the garb of religion."

Such was the great preaching of Sri Gaudiya Math in those days.

To my best capacity I have tried my best to represent to you my humble knowledge of these *Mahatmas* , and I pray that they may be propitiated and give us their favor. With this prayer, I end here: *vancha-kalpa-tarubhyas ca krpa-sindhubhya eva ca, patitanam pavanebhyo vaisnavebhyo namo namah.*

Chapter 8 Approaching the Higher World

Devotee: Guru Maharaj, what is the reason the *Brahmanas* of Jagannatha Puri don't allow Westerners to enter the Temple?

Srila Guru Maharaj: This is rather a case of physical purity. They strictly observe the physical purity. They don't allow even the *Mrdanga* into the Temple. According to them, if it is analyzed it is impure since it is made from the skin of a cow.

Also, there was a pandit of the *Smarta Sampradaya*, who had a peculiar religious conception; wherever he went, he always kept the wooden sandals of his *guru* tied about his chest. Once he wanted to enter the Temple at Pandarapur, but he was refused. The *Brahmanas* there told him, "They may be your *guru's* sandals; no doubt, they may be pure to you in your relationship, but we nonetheless consider them sandals, so you must leave them outside."

Such *Brahmanas* strictly reject the physical impurity, with some mental modification. That is their custom. So both the mental and physical habits of the *Mleccha* and *Yavana* (non- *Vedic* races and sects) are impure, that is, closely connected with *himsa* or animal-killing, etc., and generally their lifestyles are uncontrolled and boisterous in many other ways. They are not regulated according to the Vedic Scriptures.

Considering all this, those *Brahmanas* won't allow them entry to the Temple.

Even Gandhi wanted to enter the Puri Temple with some of his outcast or lower caste followers, but they were prohibited. Gandhi also stayed out. He wanted to enter along with the outcasts of society. Despite his great influence over the country, he was refused entrance. Without his knowledge, Gandhi's wife entered to have the *darsana* of Lord Jagannatha. When he came to know of it, he severely chastised her for entering without him.

So Gandhi was more of a patriot than a devotee. He thought his lordship over his wife was permanent and absolute, not to be modified even by devotion for Lord Jagannatha. But according to us, his wife did right.

How permanent is the relationship between husband and wife? For the main part it is only a bodily relationship. And what is the relationship with the Lord - the Husband of husbands, the Master of the whole world?

What is the nasty husband in this world in comparison with the Lord of the whole universe? For a national cause, or the cause of his political creed, Gandhi wanted to check his wife's going to the Temple, as though God were within the jurisdiction of politics.

Haridasa Thakura never entered the Jagannatha Temple, nor did Rupa and Sanatana. Not only that, but Sanatana Goswami even avoided the main streets where the servitors of the Jagannatha Temple would usually pass. He did not walk there, giving respect to the current laws and by-laws (of the *Pandas*, the *Brahmanas*, whose edicts were above the jurisdiction of the king). Furthermore, Sanatana Goswami wrote in *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* that the devotees should try to follow all the rules and regulations he had listed therein, and any further practices that were not mentioned should be ascertained by noting the current practices in the Temple of Jagannatha. He was so catholic in his faith in Mahaprabhu. In other words, whatever transpired there in the presence of Mahaprabhu should be taken by us as approved by Him, so we won't dare to interfere with that. He is above law. His Will is law - law comes from His Sweet Will. This principle we must not forget.

Designed and Destined by the Absolute

Everything is not only designed, but also destined by Him. The whole universe is designed and destined according to His Sweet Will. His position is so high and unchallengeable; and it is Absolute Good. Rules and regulations are created only to take us to the Absolute Good, but the Absolute Good is not under those rules or any law. The Absolute is independent, above everything. Krsna-lila is the nearest approach to the Absolute Good Himself. He is whimsical. If we realize that much, that is the best conception. To place any restriction over the Absolute Good is to commit suicide. Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: - because it is not only good, but Absolute Good.

Our intellect cannot comprehend it. Once Swami Maharaj and myself had a talk here. Then after going from here to that blue house where Swami Maharaj stayed for three weeks, his disciple Acyutananda asked him, "What sort of talk did you have with Sridhar Maharaj?" Swami Maharaj replied to him, "If you hear that, you will faint." What does it mean, 'faint'? It means, "It is beyond the reach of your consciousness, unintelligible to you in your present stage of realization."

Once Ramanujacarya wanted to modify the rules and regulations that are practiced in the Jagannatha Temple. While contemplating in this way, he slept on a bedstead, and when he awoke he found that his body along with the bedstead

was cast to Sri Kurmam of Ganjam District, in South India, some hundreds of miles away from the Jagannatha Temple.

He suddenly awoke. "Where am I?" He thought, "You gave me inspiration by instructing me in a dream to modify the existing rules and regulations that are being practiced in the Temples, and now why do You oppose me? I wanted to modify the current practices of rules and regulations at the Jagannatha Temple." Then he again dreamt of the Lord telling him, "No, don't modify here! Go elsewhere. You got the dream for the sake of other Temples, not here. Go and preach your regulations in all other Temples save and except this Temple."

Pundarika Vidyanidhi is considered to be the incarnation of Srimati Radharani's father, here in *Gaura-lila*. He thought, "What are these *Pandas*? They are awkward people - they do not know what is pure or impure. Indiscriminately they use starched cloth for dressing the Jagannatha Deity." At night he found that Jagannatha and Balarama, two Brothers, had come to his bedside and were slapping him on both cheeks.

In the morning he found that his cheeks were swollen. Others asked him, "Why are your cheeks so swollen?" He had to recount the incident. In effect, the Lord was saying, "This is not the place to suggest any change in the regulation that is going on under My direction - don't interfere!"

So there is some special grant and there are some special rules for that place. He is Absolute, unquestionable. Our inquiries need only be for the purpose of understanding something of the inevitability of how everything enters into the Absolute Good. Any law ever conceived of ultimately enters into the Absolute Goodness. Mostly, this is a matter beyond our conceptions.

Patita-pavana Jagannatha Sarvesvara , Vrndavanacandra Sarva-rasera Akara . When enumerating one hundred and twenty Names of Krsna (*Sri-KrsnaVimsottara-sata-Nama*), Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura mentions at the end, *Patita-pavana* : Jagannatha has come to save the fallen; and Krsna's special quality is that He is the Emporium of all Rasas: *Vrndavanacandra Sarvarasera Akara* - the very Source of all types of ecstasy, Personified. That is Krsna. Mahaprabhu is also *Patita-pavana* .

He passed the major portion of His life there in Jagannatha Puri. *Patita-pavana* means 'Savior of the fallen.' Everything has its speciality. As a doctor may

prescribe medicine with a free diet except for restrictions on only two or three items, similarly in the case of the Temple of Lord Jagannatha we also see great liberality, with the exception of a few items.

When I first began to appreciate Mahaprabhu and came to this line, I thought that if Mahaprabhu is the Incarnation of God, then why didn't He overthrow the non-Vedic rule? Why did he tolerate the non-Vedic rule here in India? He could have overthrown it easily. That was a question.

But gradually I came to realize that this was a very trifling matter. The ruling power or political life has nothing to do with spiritual life.

Queen Kunti rather welcomed adversity. She prayed, "Keep me always in a dangerous position. That will be convenient for me to pray for Your Grace. And ordinary worldly favorable circumstances will encourage me to ignore Your valuable Grace. So always keep me in adversity." That was her prayer. So the political environment, social environment - all other campaigns have no value. According to the result of our karma we shall be placed in a particular environment, and we must start our spiritual life from wherever we are placed; we must begin our work of conquering all those *samskaras* that comprise the mental encasement we are living in.

Crossing the walls of misunderstanding

Tat te 'nukampam susamiksamanah. We should not only live in our present position without complaint, but moreover, we shall have to consider it as really necessary for our upliftment. In this way, we have to accept what ever adversities that come to us as the Grace of the Lord.

We must cope, with this positive angle of vision of goodness:

"This is my real necessity. There is no error in the calculation of the Lord. This test has been extended to me for my benefit. To stand, to face and cross this opposition is my chance to have my progress in life. This test has been given by Krsna to facilitate my progressive life." In the *Bhagavatam* we are advised to face all adverse circumstances in such an optimistic way. Then very easily and swiftly we shall cross these walls of misunderstanding, this *Maya*, and we will be liberated, and more - we will have participation in Krsna consciousness, the life of dedication.

Distinguishing Form and Substance

Devotee: Maharaj, I have a question. I have heard two things. One, that Vaisnava *sannyasa* is the devotional line; and I have also heard that it is a formality of *Varnasrama-dharma*. What is it really?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The outer touch of *sannyasa* is within the *Varnasrama-dharma* (socio-religious system), but it also has its positive side. Both negative and positive sides are to be considered. *Danda* means 'punishment,' as well as 'staff.' The three *dandas* represent thought, word and deed. On the negative side, the three *dandas* of the symbolic triple staff or *tridanda* that the Vaisnava *sannyasi* accepts indicate that he should not use his thought, word and deed for any mundane or exploitative aim and object. But the positive side is that he will punish his thought, word and deed - to engage them in the Service of Krsna, Narayana.

Then the function becomes Vaisnavism. Those who do not believe in the positive side of life may accept *sannyasa* only as abstinence from using their thought, word and deed for any mundane purpose. They will prefer *mauna*, silence. But the Vaisnava *sannyasi* will prefer *Krsna-kirtana*, singing the Glories of the Lord. They have the positive side.

So, to check these three aspects of life from mingling with the incidents of this mundane world is only one side. But the other side is to use them for the spiritual object. That is Vaisnava *sannyasa*.

Devotee: Doesn't a *brahmacari* or a *grhastha* also utilize his thought, word and deed for the spiritual objective? Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course; but the renounced order or order of *sannyasa* is a special emblem, a reminder. It doesn't follow that one who has not taken *sannyasa* will not engage his faculties in Spiritual Service. A *grhastha Paramahansa* who is a *Parsada-bhakta* (Associate-servitor) is also possible, without *sannyasa*. He may not necessarily have a sacred thread either.

The necessity is only to remind us of that life. That is healthy. The sacred thread, the red cloth, the *danda* - they always caution us: "Think that you have dedicated your life for the spiritual objective; you are meant only for this, so be alert. Don't misuse your red cloth, your sacred thread, the *Tulasi-mala*, etc." They will remind us always. They have their utility.

A *siddha-mahatma* (perfected great soul) may not have red cloth.

Sanatana Goswami and others wore ordinary white cloth. They accepted the minimum necessity of garments. No red cloth, no *danda*, no sacred thread. Pure life is possible without those things. But for the beginners these things will be helpful, so they are introduced into the society of the Vaisnava school, in the lower plane. And sometimes the higher also come to accept these lower emblems, as, for example, Mahaprabhu took *sannyasa* .

Such an emblem or the dress of a world *Acarya* is also there to help the public to give proper respect to the wearer. If he is in ordinary dress the people won't show any respect or give any attention to his words and teachings. If a policeman or soldier is in his uniform, people will show some respect to the police or the military. But a military man or policeman may patrol in plain dress also, and do even higher service.

Still, the uniform is necessary to regulate the society.

So this is something like a uniform. The society should learn to take them as the Teachers, the holy men, and feel, "We should deal with them very gently, for our future benefit." The society will also reap that benefit; and that holy man will also gain some instruction: "Oh, I should not mix with anyone and everyone. It should be seen that my practices keep up the standard, the model of the Teachers." Otherwise, independent of such symbols a man can culture his spiritual life, without taking the role of a *brahmacari*, *grhastha*, *vanaprastha* or *sannyasi*. Internally, he can improve his heart.

Devotee: Maharaj, how does one understand, or deal with, the fall-down of a *sannyasi* or *brahmacari*? What is the correct understanding?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Generally we shall take it that there was some offense for which he could not keep the standard of life that was expected of him by his Guru Maharaj. That should be the general way of thinking about them. Some previous offense is taking its course and not allowing him to go on smoothly in the way of his realization. It suddenly appeared and checked him. In particular cases it may be *Vaisnava-aparadha* or offense against a Vaisnava, and sometimes in general cases previous bad *karma* may have come and stood in the way of his progress.

The Vigilant Eye of the Guardian

We must always be cautious with our free choice. A minor requires the vigilant eye of the major guardian; in our immature stage our free will is surrounded by many deviations. Thus, in our lower stage it will be safe to be constantly under the guidance of a bona fide guardian until we attain promotion to the major stage. This is necessary.

Initiation and karma

Devotee: So, Guru Maharaj, if one has initiation and his *karma* has been removed, how is it possible for his previous *karma* to check him?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Do you think that by initiation all *karma* is finished at once? That is not claimed anywhere. The disciples are given a chance - admission. When a doctor has accepted a patient, it does not mean that he is immediately cured; he must follow the direction of the doctor - take proper diet and medicine - then he may expect that he will be cured shortly. To call the doctor and have his prescription does not mean that the patient is fully cured. This is not practical thinking. Why hover in the theoretical, imaginary world?

Devotee: I was told in a religious mission I joined that at the time of initiation all previous *karma* is taken away. It's not like that?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Such a statement is only meant in the context that when you have called for a good doctor and accepted his treatment, your cure is guaranteed. Otherwise, we see that so many veterans are going down. If the *Guru* is so great as to be able to create a great revolution in the world, and he has given *mantra* to the disciples he has accepted, yet many of them are also falling back - why?

The initiation is a recommendation. It is not final. Cure is guaranteed under the treatment of a good doctor. But if as a patient you don't care to accept his guidance, and secretly indulge in an evil diet, of what value is your doctor? When you have a good doctor your cure is almost guaranteed. But you have to follow him. And also it is possible that if you are becoming a little ill and your doctor comes to know that 'my patient has taken this bad diet' or 'he did not use my medicine' - then the doctor will again take up the case more seriously, and he will cure you.

We may receive such help from the *Guru* and Vaisnava, but our free choice is never snatched away.

Real Taste for the Truth

Until and unless we find in our heart a real taste for the Truth, we are not safe. First, over the surface, spiritual life begins with *sraddha*, faith, and underground with *sukrti*, or special merit. Next is *sadhu-sanga*, our company with the *sadhu*. Within that is our surrender to *Guru*. Then *bhajana*, our serving life in various forms such as *sravana*, *kirtana*, *prasada-sevana*, or hearing, chanting, respecting the Lord's Remnants, etc., begins. Then *anartha-nivrtti* - our attraction for objects other than Krsna, objects other than God, diminishes. Then *nistha* - continued attempt for the Service, and not for otherwise. Then *ruci*, taste, will be created.

Real taste for the truth will be created, that is, awakened in our heart. We are safe then, but not before that. When spontaneous taste for the truth is awakened within us, we are safe. We can make fair progress from that time. Prior to that we must remain under the guardian. Taste will take me. "I have acquired the taste of sweetness, so automatically I shall run towards that which is very sweet." Until and unless we find that the Truth is sweet, Krsna is sweet, we are not safe in our approach towards Him. So many distractions may take us hither and thither.

The Guru Principle

Devotee: Maharaj, is the Guru also under the law of *karma*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: He is not under the law of *karma*. *Guru*, as I have mentioned before from the examples of the *sadhus* and the Scriptures, is generally of three kinds: one comes from Vaikuntha, or the land of wholesale truth. He comes here as an agent to take the souls up. Another *Guru* has one step here, another step there, and he carries persons from here to there. The last type of *Guru* has two feet here, but his eyes are fixed there, and he takes persons along with him to that Plane.

Chapter 9 The Divine Agent

I have heard that there is one American scientist who is researching, and he says that if he can get one cell from the body of Napoleon, he can make many Napoleons. In a potato many sprouts may come, and if we cut them one sprout will produce a potato plant. So also in the human body there are many cells, and

according to their scientific theory we can somehow create a man from one of the characteristic cells of his body. The mentality, the vigor, everything is contained in every particle of which the body is constructed.

Brahmanas, sudras and mlecchas

In a general sense, there is some importance in bodily or hereditary succession. In India, some recognition is given to the caste *Brahmanas* (those born in *Brahmana* families). But there are exceptions. So a birth from a *sudra* (laborer class) or *mleccha* (race devoid of Vedic culture) body is generally considered impure. From their ancestors they do not observe particular rites or pure customs, and the impurity is there. Many of the *Smarta* section and Sankarite interpreters, and some of the Madhva school also, hold that by chanting the Holy Name of the Lord, *Harinama*, the purification of the subtle body is effected, but the *karma* which is destined to be suffered or enjoyed in this particular body cannot be purified by *Harinama* or anything else.

Karma or the action that we have done in our previous life is classified:

aprarabdha-phalam papam kutam bijam phalonmukham

kramenaiva praliyeta visnu-bhakti-ratatmanam

"The four types of sin known as *aprarabdha*, *kuta*, *bija* and *phalonmukha* are gradually eradicated for persons exclusively attached to Devotion for the Supreme Lord Visnu."

Grades of karma

Prarabdha is the *karma* or action which has been attached to be enjoyed or suffered in this body; and *aprarabdha* is that which is deposited to be experienced in the future. *Prarabdha* means 'that which has already begun,' and *aprarabdha* is 'that which has been reserved for the future.' The stages of progress from manifest to unmanifest are classified in three: *kutam*, *bijam*, *phalonmukham*.

We can find this discussed in detail by Srila Rupa Goswami, with various Scriptural quotations, in his *Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*.

Kutam means 'the undetectable portion of our past action.' We cannot read the actions and results contained there, present in a microscopic way. They are undetectable to us.

We are told that in Japan they are preserving a library where the letters of the book cannot be read

by the ordinary eye. The letters are so tiny that they cannot be read by the naked eye, but they must be magnified by a microscopic process. So *kutam* is that which is undetectable, like a plane of action, that will gradually manifest and demand its satisfaction.

Bijam or 'seed' means something which is more detectable, more clear. We can identify a particular seed and know which type of plant it will produce; and *phalonmukham* refers to actions that are waiting to achieve their realization very soon. They are demanding.

In the stage of *prarabdha*, the previous actions have reached their satisfaction in this body. These are the divisions. The general Vedic scholars are of the opinion that *prarabdha* or that which has already begun to be experienced in this body cannot be changed. It is out of hand. And reactions that are reserved for the future may be finished by our good activity, and we may not have to undergo them.

Harer Namaiva Kevalam

But the Gaudiya Vaisnava school says that this *prarabdha* can also be removed. What is already destined to be experienced in this body can also be removed by *Harinama*, and by no other means. Only *Krsna-nama*, *Harinama*, can purify one from that which is already begun to be experienced in this body. He may be purified.

A *sudra* or *mleccha* properly taking *Harinama* may be converted to *Brahmanism*. It is possible by *Harinama*. The Gaudiya school has given quotations from different places, and by analysis of the meaning of those quotations it holds that one may be free from the *prarabdha-karma* which has already begun to be experienced in this life.

bhaktyaham ekaya grahyah sraddhayatma priyah satam

bhaktih punati man-nistha svapakan api sambhavat

(Bha: 11.14.21)

“I, the Supreme Lord and the most Beloved, am attainable by the pure saints, by virtue of the potency of their Exclusive Devotion born of faith (*sraddha*). Exclusive Devotion in Me purifies even the lowest outcasts known as *Candalas*.”

Sva means dog. Even the dog-eaters, that is, the lower section, can also be purified from their lower birth. Another verse in the same line of thought is this:

yan-namadheya-sravananukirtanat

yat prahvanad yat smaranad api kvacit

svado 'pi sadyah savanaya kalpate

kutah punas te bhagavan nu darsanat

(Bha: 3.33.6)

(Devahuti said,) "O Lord, if he just hears Your Name, then chants it, offer you obeisances and remembers You, even a person born as a dog-eating outcast instantly

becomes eligible to perform the *Soma* sacrifice; to say nothing of the purification of those who see You directly."

Those dog-eaters and lowest class of people can be immediately purified by taking the Name of the Lord. When the *prarabdha* has gone, the person becomes like Indra, but not Indra proper, a little less. *Savanaya kalpate* means *Indra-kalpa*. Now, please note very attentively Srila Jiva Goswami's remark in his commentary.

Entrance to a higher family

Savanaya kalpate means 'he becomes purified to such a standard that he can perform the sacrifice which is reserved only for the *Brahmanas*.' *Kalpate* means 'a little difference.' So here, Srila Jiva Goswami has given his own commentation. What is the little difference? When that person's *prarabdha* has gone, he attains the position of a boy of a *Brahmana*.

But the boy is not allowed to perform the *Brahmana yajna* until and unless he is given the sacred thread. A *samskara* (purificatory ceremony) is necessary. *Janmana jayate sudrah* - by birth everyone is impure, but by *samskara* they are purified. But who will be fit for the *samskara*? Only the *Brahmana* boy. Now, he reaches the stage of the *Brahmana* boy, and not the *Brahmana*.

He may have come from any caste, but after taking *Harinama* he should be considered to have reached the stage of a *Brahmana* boy; and again when that *Gayatri samskara* or *Brahmana samskara* is given, he gets the recognition of a bona fide *Brahmana* and he can perform the *yajna* and *Salagramarcana* (worship of the Deity *Salagrama-sila*), etc.

So with the *Harinama*, taking the Name of the Lord - in a proper way, of course - the *karma* vanishes, and with body purified, he is considered to be a *Brahmana* boy; and when the sacred thread is conferred to him he will become eligible for all the *Brahminical* activities.

This is the scientific position. So *Pancaratrici-diksa* may not be necessary. *Harinama* is sufficient. Still, the *Brahmana-samskara*, the *Gayatri* or *Vedic Samskara* is given, and *Pancaratrici-diksa* is also given to help him to a greater degree. For example, one may win a university scholarship, and there may also be a district scholarship that comes to help him. The student's university scholarship is all-important, but some

subservient appreciation also comes to somewhat enhance his position.

Circle within a circle

The *Harinama* circle is the purifying circle, and it is the greatest circle, extending in circumference from the lowest to highest; and the *Pancaratrika* help is a circle within the circle - it will help the candidate in taking the Name and other important practices. But without it, one may also practice.

The Divine Dispensation of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada

But there are so many *Brahmanas* and *Karma-kandis* (fruitive religionists) who will offensively consider that the Vaisnavas are inferior because they have not received the sacred thread; those *Brahmanas*, etc., must be saved. Also, a person who is taking the Name may think that *Brahmanas* are superior and the chanter of the Name holds a lesser position.

His *abhimana* or ego must also be helped to go higher: "Yes, I am said to be more than a *Brahmana*, so I shall have to become very careful about my movements, my eating and other practices." This will help him to know that he must not go below the standard of an ordinary purificatory section. At the same time, society will also be warned to deal properly with these persons who are taking the Name of Hari, by conceiving that they are exclusively given to the chanting of the Name of Hari and are therefore superior to a *Brahmana*. This system was introduced by our Guru Maharaj. He conferred the sacred thread extensively.

That is to give the position of a *Brahmana*, outwardly. In calculation from the inner side, a Vaisnava is above a *Brahmana*. But from the outer side also he created this particular society in which a Vaisnava who is exclusively given to Krsna consciousness must be recognized as not less, but more than a *Brahmana*. He reformed the society to establish the position of the Vaisnava, thus also encouraging him: "You must not go down; you are taking the Name of Hari, exclusively given to Krsna consciousness, and you must maintain your position in the external way so that even the *Brahmanas* or the Vedic school will feel some reverence for the position you hold. You must be cautious in your dealings and in your practices; and also the society will think, 'Don't underestimate these persons who are exclusively given to Krsna consciousness.'" In this way, he reformed society.

Although Mahaprabhu had not introduced this, our Guru Maharaj, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, adjusted the society to bring Mahaprabhu's Teachings to the world in a broad way.

Previously, Rupa, Sanatana and followers did not care to take any sacred thread. Also, in the *sannyasa* system of the *Varnasrama*, Sankara and others give up the sacred thread to the fire when they take *sannyasa*, showing that they have no necessity of a sacred thread; they're above that, above *Brahmana*. Yet their creed is 'we are one with *Brahman*' - and here is the infinite difference. The higher a Vaisnava is, the more he will say "I am the slave of Krsna, and the slave of the slaves of the slave of Krsna." But the Mayavadis identify themselves with the highest Entity. They have fallen prey to complete misconception of the Revealed Scriptures or *Veda*. This is the position.

In Manu-samhita we find three classes of births:

matur agre 'dhijananam dvitiam maunji-bandhane

tritiam yajna-diksayam dvijasya sruti-codanat

(Manu 2.260)

Matur agre 'dhijananam: first we take our body from the mother, or the parents. *Dvitiyam maunji-bandhane*: the second birth is by receiving sacred thread in a *Brahmana* family. *Tritiam yajna-diksayam*: again, the third is to take this *Pancaratrici-diksa*, to help for further progress. This is in *Manu-samhita*. A *Brahmana* man has three births.

The second, *maunji-bandhane* is Gayatri or Vedic *diksa*. It teaches us: 'try to have your reading from the example that has been set by the *Veda*. Don't believe what your experience tells you, but try to follow how the revealed truth wants you to read the environment.' Don't survey your environment with your own fleshy eye and ear, but with a more scientific education try to see things beyond that.

Of course, science is also generally mundane, but revealed truth tells us to see things in another way: nothing is for me, but everything is for the Supreme Authority. We are a particle of that. Try to read your environment in this way. Everything belongs to the center and we are a part of that organic whole, and our duty must be ascertained accordingly.

This is the Vedic process of reading the environment. And ordinary vision is, 'I am monarch of all I survey.' We want to utilize everything for our purpose. This is mundane.

Initiation - the imparting of Divine Knowledge

divyam jnanam yato dadyat kuryat papasya sanksayam

tasmad dikseti sa prokta desikais tattva-kovidaih

What is the meaning of the word *diksa*? *Diksa* is the process by which *divya-jnana* or transcendental knowledge is imparted to a person. *Upanayana* means that a new eye is given to the person: "The eye with which you now see cannot see correctly. But the eye is given from the *Vedas*, as Gayatri. From this time onwards try to learn your environment in a different way."

Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, Satya - these planes of the world of your experience evolve from consciousness. *Bhuh* means the world of this fleshy eye, ear, etc. *Bhuvah* means the mental aspect of

the same. In this way, there are finer and finer conceptions of things. And what is the cause of such experience? Our consciousness - soul - the light within us. So only with the help of that can we read things around us impartially.

Savitur varenyam - and there is another realm that is venerable to this gross world of conception. Another worshipable and finer realm is there. There is another plane - God with his entourage lives there; all serve Him, the center, and that is the norm there. It is perfectly known to the members of that world that the center is all-in-all. We must obey the central authority, and there we can thrive. That is proper life.

There is another world in the subtlest area. Above our soul is the supersoul area. The Gayatri *mantra* comes to help us with all these things. It teaches us: "Don't think what you read by the experience of your fleshy senses is all-in-all. There are other planes of life and you must recognize them, and prepare your life's program accordingly.

"You cannot divorce the possibility of these different planes of existence. Prepare yourself properly for the great task. Although at this moment you cannot have any experience of it, there is a super-experience world and you must prepare yourself for that, otherwise you will have to end your life in failure. You can attain good success in this life."

This is the purpose of *diksa*. Transcendental knowledge, *divyam jnanam*, is imparted to the man who would otherwise depend on his experienced knowledge or the knowledge drawn from his perception.

The *Harinama-diksa* is the most central and simple. There is one sound aspect of the Lord, and you may come in touch with that and go on cultivating the sound aspect of the Whole, in Krsna consciousness. Only with the connection and cultivation of His sound aspect you can go to the center. That is *Harinama*; and in the case of the *mantra*, the Name is couched in a particular way to give the meaning, "I am casting myself unto Him, for His satisfaction."

The *mantra* is couched in such a way that we pray: "I am throwing myself for the satisfaction of my Supreme Lord." That helps us to take the Name with the proper attitude. *Sevonmukha* - we are dying for real life. Sacrifice means 'die to live.' It is to throw oneself. The process of surrender has been given in the *mantra*.

How should you advance in taking the Name? What is the process? You must throw yourself and your ego of experience to the fire. That will be destroyed and the inner ego will emerge, and that will be more beneficial for you to take the real Name and to approach the real plane where Krsna, your Lord, is living; this is to go home. These are the points in *diksa*.

Back to Home, back to Godhead

Devotee: Sometimes my *Diksa-Guru* (initiating Spiritual Master) used to say that within this lifetime one can be perfected and then, at the end of this lifetime, go back home, back to Godhead.

Srila Guru Maharaj: It is very rarely found that in this one life, in a single life from this plane one can reach the highest life. But generally it requires lives together, if in a real process. There may also be setbacks. If one commits *Vaisnava-aparadha* or *Nama-aparadha* (offense to the Vaisnava or the Holy

Name), he may be detained again and again. It is not such a cheap thing. Still, there is the possibility that when properly guided a proper soul may attain the highest position in a single life. It is not impossible.

Devotee: Sometimes he said that a devotee could take birth where Krsna is having His pastimes within this material world, and he will be trained according to his given Service to Krsna, and after that go to Goloka.

Srila Guru Maharaj: What do you think? That is to live in Vrndavana. That must be helpful, but this Nabadwip is more helpful. There is the possibility of committing offenses. We can be misled by taking lust as love. We can misidentify our enjoyment as Devotion or *Prema*. The possibility is there. In that case we would become *Sahajiya*. They imitate everything. What is the value of only living in the land of what we see by our senses? It has been told that the *Dhama* is *aprakṛta*, not material, not to be experienced by our senses. We must try to live in that *Dhama* - the *cinmaya*, that is, the fully conscious area.

So if we really do not want to deceive ourselves we must not ignore the steps by which we may go there. With proper help and inspiration we may know that Vrndavana is for the higher. We may get some inspiration. Caution is needed in attending *Kṛṣṇa-dhama*, as much as it is required for attending *Kṛṣṇa-līla*. But if we are not sincere we may commit offenses, and that will hurl us down.

The Glory of Sri Nabadwip Dhama

Rather, Nabadwip *Dhama* is more accommodating. There also *aparadha* is possible, but it may be minimized. Nabadwip will help us, as *sadhakas* (aspirants) to feel, 'I am not so high; I am not holding such a high position as those of Vrndavana.' In chanting the Name or residing in the *Dhama* - with everything there is consideration of offenses; and less consideration of offenses is found in Nabadwip *Dhama*. It is more liberal. Still, the most important factor is *sadhu-sanga* - the superior guide.

Srila Narottama Thakura has written,

tirtha-yatra parisrama, kevala manera bhrama,

sarva-siddhi govinda-carana

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has also written:

ye tirtha vaisnava nai, se tirthete nahi yai

ki labha hatiya duradesa?

yathaya vaisnava-gana, sei sthana vrndavana,

The Divine Agent

Where is Vrndavana? We may only reach Vrndavana at the proper stage of realization. If we take Vrndavana in the physical sense, we will commit so many offenses according to our habit and we shall have to mentally go downwards. So the illumination given by the *sadhu* and *sastra* should be our guide. Only by that way can we go to Vrndavana, or anywhere and everywhere. But the guiding star must always be our *Guru*, to guide us and show us what is what. As long as my self is not rising to that stage, I am always in need of a guide to show me what is what, what is Vrndavana.

Vrndavana is not a physical eye-experience. It is not in the world of our flesh experience. It is highest of the high. Through *sraddha*, faith, we must begin our journey beyond the subjective, towards the supersubjective area. That is Vrndavana proper, where we can find Krsna proper.

It is not to be found in any physical plane. He can come here: the higher plane can come in the gross, but it is not easy for those who are living in the gross plane to rise up to the higher. They can come, an agent can come, and they can take us there. But without the help of the agent it is not easy to go to that highest plane by our own experience. So our necessity is always *sadhu-sanga*. To go to Vrndavana we must have a guide. He will always caution us to see things with the proper angle of vision. A guide, *sadhu-sanga*, is the most important factor in the life of a bona fide seeker of the truth. And next is *sastra*, Revealed Scriptures.

In *Bhagavad-gita* there are classifications in three classes: *sattva*, *raja* and *tama*. The lowest kind of knowledge forcibly says that things are not what they are. This is *tamoguna*. Such as thinking, 'I am this body.' In *rajoguna* there is doubt, 'Oh, this may not be that. My conjecture and experience may not be perfect.' And *sattva*, the last, is of course to understand things properly as they are. So knowledge is of different stages.

To think that Vrndavana is in our mundane eye, ear and touch experience can never be Vrndavana. Vrndavana proper is in the supersoul area; and only our *atma*, soul, can go there; not this body, mind, etc. Otherwise what is the necessity of spiritual practices or *sadhana*, the means to the end?

Thus *diksa* is to throw oneself to the Vedic doctrine; to give up one's own knowledge of experience and invite the revealed estimation of the environment. It is to leave this world of mundane experience and to go to the transcendental world.

Somehow we must effect that journey. There is no short cut without that journey. Of course, with the help of proper guide we may have a short cut in the sense that we do not waste valuable time. Also, if we had some experience of the way in a previous life, that may help us to shorten the journey of this life.

Devotee: I went to an Ashram where they said that without directly receiving the *siddha-pranali* or revelation of one's internal identity as a Gopi, etc., spiritual perfection is incomplete.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Let them do so. They are representing the Sahajiya school. Our Guru Maharaj wrote several poems, one of which is *Prakṛta-rasa Sata-dusani* - 'a hundred defects in the Sahajiya conception.' The defects are innumerable, but our Guru Maharaj put forward a hundred points of the defects in their process of 'advancement.' Mainly they are very easy purchasers. They are not prepared to pay the real price.

But the death blow to them is this:

upajiya bade lata 'brahmada' bhedi' yaya

'viraja, "brahmaloka," bhedi' 'paravyoma' paya

tabe yaya tad upari 'goloka-vrndavana'

'krsna-carana'-kalpavrkse kare arohana

(C.c. Madhya 19.153,4)

One must first cross the different gross and subtle layers of the *Brahmada* (mundane universe); then Viraja, the extremity of the jurisdiction of Maya or misconception; then the *Brahman* conception, the halo of the real or transcendental world; then, Vaikuntha, which is *Paravyoma*, a sphere of consciousness.

The *jiva* comes from *tatasthaloka*, the marginal position or the abscissa, and he must go through higher planes where the soil is more valuable than he himself. Can you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: *Vaikunthera prthivy adi sakala cinmaya*. What is Vaikuntha? There the soil, earth, water - everything is of purer consciousness than the person who is going to enter there. Can you imagine it?

Devotee: In one of your books you mentioned a 'land of Gurus.'

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. They are all *Guru*, they are all of superior value by nature; yet, we have to pass over them. I sometimes give an example that if it is necessary for the Service we may even put our foot on the throne of the Lord (for example, to place His crown on His head, etc.,) and afterwards come back down, offer our obeisance and then come out from the Deity room.

Entering the Land of Gurus

So we must enter and stay in a soil which is made of a stuff which is more valuable than our own selves. A slave when serving the emperor may come near the emperor's bed where even his near and dear cannot go or hesitate to go. He can, only for serving. So it is only for the Divine Service, for the necessity of the highest, that we can pass through that soil. It is not an easy thing. It is inconceivable. The fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Vaikunthera prthivy adi sakala cinmaya. We must understand the conception properly. The *jiva* has emerged

from the *tatastha-sakti* or marginal potency. He is a part of the marginal potency, and he must enter into the higher plane. This gross world is of gross potency, *apara-sakti*; the *jiva*, although marginal, is of a potency superior to this gross world, or *para-sakti*; and above both is the Internal Potency or *antaranga-sakti*. We have to enter into *antaranga-sakti*. This marginal potency is to enter into *antaranga-sakti* - and that is Paravyoma, and the highest quarter, Vrndavana, Goloka. It is not a light matter. It is the fact.

So we must serve. In this world there is exploitation and renunciation; beyond them is dedication. Dedication is the proper and normal world. There are gradations according to our inner tendency of serving a particular calling. We may be allowed to enter that plane where all around is reverential soil. We must go there. Apparently it is impossible, but it is possible by Grace, *krpa*. That is called *krpa* - His Grace, His free will. He is autocrat. Affection (*raga, anuraga*) does not differentiate between great and small. It is very generous. Only through affection and love is it possible to expect to go there one day. But it is not so easy. When one young devotee began to show so many (apparently devotional) sentiments, others came to me asking, "He is showing many signs of higher bhava (sentiments), are they real?" I said, "Never!"

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"I have no love for Krsna"

Mahaprabhu says "I am hankering for a drop of real *Prema*; I have not yet got that; still, I am weeping, shedding tears so much, crying 'Krsna Krsna', but that all hypocrisy, because the positive proof is here - without Him, I am living. I did not disappear, dissolve. I am living, I am eating, I am taking bath, I am sleeping. This is positive proof that I have no genuine love for Krsna." Mahaprabhu Himself says that. It is such a valuable thing and we think ourselves masters of it overnight! Fools, deceivers, self-deceivers! In the positive way it can never be attained. Only in the negative way we can have some conception. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says,

vicaksana kari', dekhite cahile haya,

haya akhi-agocara

"Suddenly a flash came, but when I tried to see that, it disappeared. It was withdrawn." In this way, in a negative way, we can have some idea. Whimsically He may come, and suddenly I may feel, "Oh! some experience of the higher kind of knowledge and love - but if I try to cast my eye that side? Nothing . . ."

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Sacrifice - wholesale dissolution of the mundane experience

Do you want to die? Then come to live. We shall have to invite wholesale dissolution of everything in our experience. Hegel's words help us: 'die to live.' What is generally considered a concrete, valuable thing must be cast into fire, for some hope which is 'un-understandable,' unknown and unknowable. Sacrifice means that. Sacrifice gives that suggestion. It may be thought that we pour such a valuable foodstuff, *ghee*, into fire; that *ghee* is burnt in the fire and smoke is produced, and that will create a healthier atmosphere, a kind

of filtering that we invite for our benefit. Of course, to say such a thing is improper and ridiculous, yet the benefit from the unknown quarter is there. Unknown. Be disgusted with your known world, knowledge, pleasure everything. Die to live. All risk, no gain. And when the destination has been reached to a certain extent - all gain, no risk.

Actually, what we risk is all concoction, the misunderstanding aspect. We only need to throw our misconception into fire to gain a proper conception of reality. When the unreal is put into fire, we gain the real. To die to live means this.

Here, in this world, we are habituated to think, "I am monarch of all I survey." We want to become a monarch. Whether we are monarch or not, our tendency is to want to be monarch. All of us want to be monarch. And there is another reactionary school that says, "I do not want anything - I want nothing but dreamless sleep. Cessation is the most valuable thing in our experience - complete cessation of this life."

Both these aspects of enjoyment, or exploitation, and renunciation, must be eliminated, and a third plane should be found to live in. That third plane is the life of a gentleman, the life of dedication. A life of duty, not to any part, but for the whole: "I live for the whole, and that whole is a part of Lord Krsna." This is to be a lover of the beautiful. In that way we have to understand, and march onward.

Infinity - a negligible aspect of the Lord

athava bahunaitena kim jnatena tavarjuna

vistabhyaham idam krtsnam ekamsena sthito jagat

"Arjuna, the infinite of your conception is in my one negligible part. I am so great that the infinite of your conception is contained in only a fraction of Me . . ."

Then what is our chance of approaching Him? We may think, "Krsna is only a reflection of a picture in my mind. There is Krsna. The whole forms His one part, and I am approaching Him? My only solace will be that I am going through His agent. He has sent His agent to recruit me, and that is my hope. He has sent His men to recruit me. He's so kind and benevolent, and that will be my hope. I must be thankful for that, and not be a traitor to His agent." We must be cautious to see that we do not play treachery with his agent for thereby we commit treachery against ourselves.

Om Visnupada Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada ki jaya! Srimad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj ki jaya!

Divine Tribute

You are all his contribution. Swami Maharaj (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada) brought you here, attracted you to this side, and I have been given some opportunity to serve you in this way (by speaking to you). Willingly or unwillingly, I am forced to do some service in that line.

It was so wonderfully and tremendously done by Swami Maharaj, his preaching to the foreign countries is an inconceivable thing - so I say *Saktyavesavantara*: some supernatural transcendental power, the Grace of Nityananda, entered into him, and as an instrument, he has done for his Lord a tremendous work to attract your attention towards the culture of Mahaprabhu Chaitanyadev. Sri Gauranga's gift attracted your attention. Bhaktivinoda Thakura could see this, and our Guru Maharaj began in his mild way.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura saw it as self-evident that the intelligentsia could not but be attracted by such a plain, simple and dignified gift - the gift of Mahaprabhu, the conception of Mahaprabhu. Such a magnanimous conception of their position, as foretold by Mahaprabhu, could not but be accepted by the sincere intelligentsia of the world. He could see this general truth. Guru Maharaj began, and Swami Maharaj successfully completed that work. After all, the Divine Will was fulfilled. It is not in the jurisdiction of the lower agents of this world, the subordinate gods or agents.

We are attracted by this - die to live, reality is for itself. We are to sacrifice everything 'for Himself.' We are 'for Himself.' Our prospect is in His Service. All our prospect is in His Service, but in the highest degree it is loving service - service of affection, without any calculation of loss and gain. It is above that, in the area of love and affection, beauty and charm. We are members there. Our prospect is there. It is offered to us. Above justice, above knowledge (*jnana-sunya-bhakti*).

Sri Chaitanyadev - inconceivable Self-forgetfulness

Even if Chaitanyadev is considered as a human being, we have never seen in any history of the world such intense affinity for the highest as was seen in Him; such an intensified mentality towards the highest conception of Absolute; such self-forgetfulness. There is self-forgetfulness in Socrates, and the Christians also speak of self-sacrifice in Christ. But the degree of self-forgetfulness that was shown in the life of Sri Chaitanyadev was never to be conceived of or seen before, even if we think of Him as a human.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura mentioned in his autobiography, "When I first came to study *Bhagavata* and Sri Chaitanyadev, I thought, why did an exceptional scholar like Sri Chaitanyadev support the debauchery of the Supreme Lord in Vrndavana as the highest end of life? What is the reason? He was one of the highest and greatest scholars, and He ultimately supported the debauchery, stealing, etc., of the Absolute, as being the highest conception. How was this possible? Then I began to pray to the Lord to reveal the fact to me. I couldn't follow it."

Then he said that the flash came; and with that, it also came to him that Chaitanyadev is Krsna Himself. He is revealing Himself, giving the clue to the scientific position of His own Identity as Krsna. Why? In the highest sense He's Autocrat, above law. He's the owner of the whole, above law. He's absolute good.

We must not forget that He is absolute good, with everything belonging to Him. We put forth that we have claim over the environment or over ourselves. 'I belong to me' - this is false. I am not an independent factor in this world. I am a part and a parcel. I belong to someone, I have got my master. Everything belongs to Him, and without any condition. Unconditionally every atom belongs to the controlling center. And that is love and goodness. Where is the objection? Where is the cause for objection? No cause for objection can

evidently stand if we can really find what is the real position and nature of the Cause - Absolute Good, Love.

To Love is to give

The essence of love lives by distribution; not by absorption, but by distribution. That is love. *Prema* is that which exists by its tendency of distribution, and that is the highest. If a mother forcibly takes her child to her breast, is it bad? The child is crying for milk, but he does not know how to mitigate the pain of hunger in his belly. So is it force, or affection?

We are laboring under so much suspicion; so engrossed in and oppressed by Maya, misunderstanding, the misrepresented part of the world, that we cannot even think of the conception of truth and goodness. We are so far from the standard of goodness and truth, we cannot understand what should be the real symptom of higher existence. So fallen. Satan says, "It is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." That is generally the outcome of our life of experience here. We want to reign in hell rather than serve in heaven. But just the opposite will be really helpful to us. Die to live.

diksa-kale bhakta kare atma-samarpana

sei kale krsna tare kare atma-sama

sei deha kare tara cidananda-maya

aprakṛta-dehe tara carana bhajaya

(C.c. Antya 4.192,193)

Previously I said that *diksa* was the process by which Divine Knowledge is imparted, the knowledge of the infinite world is imparted, to the finite. What is that process? *Diksa-kale bhakta kare atma-samarpana*: the candidate must fully surrender to a knowledge that is coming down and being imparted to him.

Sei kale krsna tare kare atma-sama: Krsna accepts him as His own. It is necessary for him to give up all his knowledge of experience, fully, perfectly, and clean-handed. Naked, he will be prepared to accept the higher knowledge, and the higher knowledge will absorb him as his own.

Sei deha kare tara cidanandamaya: from that time, he gets a conception of another body, not this body of flesh and blood or the mind. His ego becomes colored by the higher knowledge. He hopes for another personification of his own. And *aprakṛta-dehe krsna-carana bhajaya*: in that body he can serve Krsna, not this body of flesh or the mental body which is drawn from the experience of this world. These are unfit. Only the new body, the inner body that comes in contact with that Divinity - that body or ego, can enter there and serve; and this is by the Grace, always by the Grace, and not as a matter of right; still, the Grace is so lenient that a servitor may think, "it is my right." Really, in *tatastha-vicara* (impartial judgment), if from

our relative position we venture to tackle the absolute conception, we can only think that we are unfit. Only through Grace can we attain a position there.

Absolute and Relative in the Divine

Apparently Yasoda is whipping Krsna. Her position is superior to Krsna. Krsna is under her control. This is the relative position. But from the absolute position Yasoda is none but a servitor of Krsna. Yet, by Grace, in the relative position she is superior. The fact is not so different, because the potency is His own.

Sometimes He, Himself, is controlled by that fine potency of pleasure. He says in the story of Ambarisa, *aham bhakta-paradhino hy asvatantra iva dvija*: "I am dependent upon my devotees, as if I have got no independence."

Iva means 'as if.' That is His posing. Devotion is such. His Potency, peculiar particular Potency, Devotion, is so powerful that sometimes it works beyond His own Will.. But that is Devotion to Him. Submission to the master is so intense that the master becomes subservient to the servant - through affection: "At My beck and call he can give his life. So how should I deal with him?" Automatically, the master's heart goes to him. That is Love, *Prema*.

Srila Rupa Goswami wrote: *sri-krsnakarsini ca sa*. The highest and most excellent capacity and qualification of Devotion can forcibly draw Krsna towards the devotee, though He is absolutely independent. *Bhakti* or self-sacrifice to the extreme, sacrifice for serving - Loving Service - is so powerful that the Lord becomes a friend and in different ways he comes to meet His devotees.

Asvatantra iva dvija: "Although I am free, I depend on my devotee as though I am not. Sometimes I feel like that."

This is independence proper. Absolute means this. Absolute does not mean that mercilessly He is bruising everything under His feet. There is love. Embracing. All-interest is represented there. He has love. He is the Lord of Love. So our fortune, our luck, is represented there in Him, the transaction of love and affection is so great. Hare Krsna.

Chapter 10 Supersubjective Reality

Devotee: It was very nice at your birthplace; I enjoyed that very much -

Srila Guru Maharaj: - enjoyed?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: That is not to be enjoyed. We should not use that

expression 'to enjoy' about any place of reverence. We should try to see with only a serving attitude. Higher existence is to be tackled only with awe, reverence, and serving attitude. Otherwise, we shall be anthropomorphists; we shall take one thing for another. *Martya-buddhi -aparadha*. It will be offense. Whenever we shall approach the higher subjective realm, we should feel that "I am not seeing; I am not the subject, but that is seeing me." Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: That is the supersubjective element. For example, when we stand before the *Sri Murti*, the Deity, our attitude should be, "I am not seeing Him, He is seeing me." He's the seer. We have to approach the transcendental world not as a seer, but as we are being seen by Him. We are being bathed, cleansed by the ray of His vision. Can you understand this?

Devotee: Yes, yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Our whole approach should be like this, otherwise we shall see mundane things and imagine them to be spiritual. We won't come practically in connection with that reality. The reality is supersubjective. Taking this world as the object, we are a subject. But when I am going to have a touch of the Supersubjective, I must know that He is all-seer, all-feeler, all-hearer. The very basis of spiritual life is like this. Then we shall come in contact with the higher reality; otherwise we shall go on plodding in the mud of imagination. The attitude should be to want to be utilized by Him, and try for any chance of serving Him: "I have come here to serve, and not to enjoy the scenery." Can you feel this?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: This will take us to connection with the higher substance - subjective, super-subjective, super- super- super- supersubjective - the very fine, finer, finest - in this way, in the sphere of consciousness. So *jnana-sunya* - one should surrender himself: "How can I be utilized by Him?" This is the way. Otherwise, what is the use of sight-seeing? Enjoy the scenery - that is offensive.

Devotee: When the environment comes to attack us, how can we see that as Krsna?

Srila Guru Maharaj: When the environment is unfavorable?

Devotee: Yes.

Srila Guru Maharaj: We shall try to find out the Supreme Will there.

We should feel, "I have done something wrong, so this is coming to control me and to exact the reaction for my offenses. *Tat te 'nukampam susamiksamano*. In the perfect vision, we are not to quarrel with the environment. "Not even a straw can move without the Supreme Will, without the order of the Supreme Will. So, whatever is coming to attack me is my necessity. Just that is necessary for me, to correct me."

Just as when the mother is punishing the child, she does so only with the good will to correct the child. Similarly, the Absolute has got no vindictive nature to punish me, but His dealings are only for my correction. We shall have to see and approach in that way.

Tat te 'nukampam susmiksamano bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam:

"Whatever undesirable I find here is the result of my previous *karma* , and by the good will at the Supreme, that previous *karma* is going to be finished. I will be relieved. I will be made fit for higher; service to Him, so this has come." That is the advice in *Bhagavatam*. Don't quarrel with the environment. Try to be adjusted with it; correct your own ego.

Everything is all right.

Your ego is demanding some sort of comfort from the environment. That is the cause of this hitch. There's no hitch in the outside, no ailment; but within, your ego creates the problem. That false ego should be dissolved, and the liquid nectar will flow and place you within the highest plane, the plane where there is no complaint. The smooth movement, affectionate movement of the most fundamental plane: your soul will find yourself standing and walking in that plane. And the false friends -

the circumstances we think to be friends but which are really all false - those false friends will be withdrawn. That is *nirguna*, the causeless flow of welfare, most fundamental in the Absolute Plane. That is *Bhakti* proper. *Bhakti* means *seva* , service - Service Divine. That is a causeless wave. The deepest wave, the wave of the deepest plane. That is causeless and that is irresistible. That means no beginning, no end. Eternal flow.

And only my soul can take a stand in that plane and move in harmony with that plane.

Katha ganam natyam gamanam. In Brahma-samhita it is mentioned, "All the talks there are as sweet as song; all the walking there, movement, is as sweet as dancing." In this way, everything is sweet. That is the harmonious movement plane. In Vrndavana. We have to go back to that home.

We have come out with the spirit of colonization in a foreign land, with the bad object of exploitation. For the purpose of exploitation we have come to colonize in this material world, and as a reaction we suffer. The whole cover must be eliminated, and our person within, the finest ego, must emerge. Within this gross mischievous ego there is the finer ego, soul; and that is the child of that soil. Do you understand?

Devotee: Yes. Sometimes I understand -

Srila Guru Maharaj: So, faultfinding will take us in the wrong direction. Finding fault in others is the negative side. We should feel, "Cent-per-cent I shall engage my attention to correct myself. My responsibility is there. My main responsibility is to correct myself."

'Physician cure thyself.' That should be the principle of any bona fide student of this Krsna consciousness. That is the positive side; and the negative side, indirect side, is to judge others' practices and how to associate with them. We shall associate with the good and we shall avoid those who are not up to standard. But this is the negative side, and this is not as important as the positive side. We shall be optimistic to see good everywhere, and for ourselves we should think, "My knowledge and angle of vision is bad, so I can't see others properly." 'Physician cure thyself.'

If our *acara* or our own practices are well, only then can we have some qualification for preaching to others. How can one who is not in a normal position try to bring others to a normal position? If we shall take the Divine Name, there are also many considerations. Mainly there are ten kinds of offenses to avoid, which deny us proper conception. Proper conception will help proper dealing and positive attainment, which is how to get out of the negative side. Maya means misconception, misunderstanding, misleading. We are misleading the environment.

The difficulty is all apparent and suicidal. Sometimes we want causeless mercy; at the same time we can't tolerate others in that same line. We go to judge in the case of others: "Why should he receive causeless mercy?"

He has got so many defects, so much anti-attitude and disqualification, why should he be accepted or given any chance?" But for us - we want, "Don't come to judge me, otherwise I have no hope, my Lord."

Jnana-sunya-bhakti. "If You come to judge, I have got no hope. Please grant grace, then I can hope to approach You, to offer myself to make progress towards You; if You become very lenient, not to find fault with me"; but if at the same time, in the same breath, we say, "Why should this disqualified man get any grace? Why should he get some mercy and affection?" that is hypocrisy in us, and that causes a great deal of difficulty within us. It is suicidal.

This is *Vaisnava-ninda*, *Vaisnava-aparadha* - offense to the devotee. A devotee may be accepted by Him, and gradually he will be purified; but we are very eager to find fault in him. That is most dangerous for our own progress; it is suicidal. If in my case I want something higher, but in the case of others I can't tolerate the same behavior of the Lord, that is a most difficult position.

Generally that is the basis of *Vaisnava-aparadha*. When someone has been accepted by the Lord, and He is gradually purifying him, and we give particular attention to the remnants of impurities and difficulties in him, the result is that all those difficulties will be transferred to us. This is the actual experience. If I especially mark the fault of another devotee, that will be transferred to me. It happens. In our experience and also in the *sastra* we have seen this.

So, one must be very careful not to make any remark generally about the practices and activities of another Vaisnava. It may be possible only in the case when one is empowered by the Supreme; just as in the case of his disciple. To correct his disciples, with a guardian's sympathetic eye, he can mark the defects, and he will help them to remove them. There must be some affectionate heart within. Not jealousy or anything of that type, but with good will; the affectionate guardian's want to remove the defects.

Either from the position of *Siksa-Guru* or *Diksa-Guru* one may detect the faults of the students of this line, and help them sincerely to get free from them. Otherwise, if we are attracted by those faults, they will come to us and we shall

have to pay for it.

It is a practical thing; and also based on good reason and scriptural advices. We must be careful. It is also warned in the Vaisnava literature that we must be careful about *Vaisnava-aparadha* that comes from the jealous spirit of competition. That jealousy is very detrimental to our spiritual life.

So we all must be very careful to not be especially attracted by any defect. If some doubt about anyone comes to our attention we may refer it to the higher authority. But if we make too much of it, either in opposition or in any other way, that will be transferred back. We must know, "I am devouring. My mind is coming in touch with that fault."

That is being devoured as food, and the contamination is transferred to the critic; somehow it is entering into the mental system of the critic, and it must get its satisfaction there, as a reaction.

This is like a trade secret of our devotional line. You must be aware and very careful about these practical difficulties in the path of your life.

So we have been recommended, *tat te 'nukampam susamiksmano*: the faculty of judgment has been discouraged; your standard of measuring things won't stand there. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti*. You have to learn a new alphabet here. In the devotional school you have to come in connection with a new alphabet. The old alphabet won't do. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti*.

Give up all the pride of your past experience. Your knowledge out of experience of the mortal world won't do here, won't be applied here. This is the position in the case of the Infinite Autocrat and Goodness.

In our mouth we pronounce all these big things - Absolute Good - Absolute Truth - but we do not know about the characteristic of that. So we need His revelation. He reveals Himself. We must carefully note His nature.

So, *jnana-sunya* - give up the pride of your old experience on the basis of which you will go to judge things. It is not like that. A new law is here, and we have to think of the land of Autocrat and Goodness. In *jnana-sunya-bhakti* the first step will be to give up all the pride of our previous experience, and to begin a new life: "I shall accept the laws of the infinite, not the laws of this finite world that I acquired as a subject. I shall have to enter that domain as an object, of the

subject. There, He is the subject and I am the object here, possessing only a particle of the space there; and that is also at His sweet will. At any time I may be dispossessed of it." This is not in the democratic government, but in the mad monarchy - a kind of dictatorship. This is to live in the land of dictatorship, and not in the democracy and law. *Jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva* .

Everywhere we shall try our best to find mercy, grace, kindness, pity.

Because whatever the dictator is doing is all good. We have to be trained like that. He's the highest dictator, without fault, so we may or may not understand, but whatever is commanded by the dictator must be helpful for us. There is no law on which we shall base our judgment and give any remark. To remark is not only absolutely useless but it is faulty and injurious to ourselves. Such consciousness we have to acquire, and it is not unreasonable.

Newton said, "I am only collecting pebbles on the shore of the ocean of knowledge." He was a man of this world, yet he had the sincerity and courage to make this statement. If such a statement is made in deference to the knowledge of only this world, what should be thought of the knowledge of the infinite unknown and unknowable? We must have courage, just as Columbus floated his ship to discover America. He had the courage. To float our little boat in the ocean of the unknown and unknowable, we must be cognizant that the laws will be of that type. The laws of the higher ocean may not be applied in the strait or local sea. A thoroughly new thing we have to study - the revealed truth. If we go to measure the infinite with the law of finite, it will be hopeless for us to go that side. We must invite and think purely of that land, that standard. The unknown world.

svayam samuttirya sudustaram dyaman

bhavarnavam bhimam adabhra-sauhrdah

bhavat-padambhoruha-navam atra te

nidhaya yatah sad anugraho bhavan

(Bhagavatam, 10.2.31)

"O Self-revealed One, You are *Bhakta-vanchakalpa-taru*, the wishfulfilling tree of the devotee. The great devotees surrendered unto Your Lotus Feet, who have

crossed over this ghastly insurmountable ocean of mundanity, have left the boat of Your Lotus Feet in this world (in the *Guru-parampara* or in the line of Revealed Truth, *Srauta-pantha*) - because, they are greatly affectionate to all beings."

The Devas (Brahma and Siva) say in the Bhagavatam, "The saints who by Your Grace have crossed that insurmountable ocean, that dreadful ocean, with dreadful waves and so many water animals - those saints again sent back the boat, which is compared with the Lotus Feet of the Lord. By the help of the Lotus Feet of You, the Infinite Absolute Lord, they cross this ocean, by the Grace of Your Holy Feet; and they again send that boat back here for others to cross the same ocean. They're experienced about the ocean, and in which way they crossed and what difficulty they faced, and where. Your devotees are so magnanimous that after using the boat of Your Holy Feet to cross, they again send them back for us. Because, their friendship for the people is very white, and pure. And You are always in favor of those devotees, so by their request you can't refuse. You allow Your Lotus Feet again to come this side and take others across."

Chapter 11 Loving Surrender

Knowledge is our enemy, because knowledge in this world is all misleading. Its very basis is misleading. However spacious it may be, it is the negligible part of the infinite. We have collected, gathered and pushed into our brain all misleading misrepresentation. Our brains are full of misleading Maya, misunderstanding. So that is our enemy. We have to clear these things out and put in fresh things that are indented from the other world by pure sources. The theoretical is one thing, the practical another. Srila Rupa Goswami has quoted:

jnanatah sulabha muktir bhuktir yajnadi punyatah

seyam sadhana-sahasrair hari-bhaktih sudurllabha

(Bhakti rasamrita sindhu, Purva 1.36)

"(Mahadeva says,) 'By practice of enlightenment, *jnana*, liberation is attained easily enough. By pious work such as sacrifice, *yajna* , etc.,

worldly pleasure in the next life is attained easily enough. But Devotion for the

Supreme Lord, *Hari-bhakti*, is very rarely attained."

By cultivating our knowledge of soul, we can attain *mukti*, that is, emancipation or liberation from miscalculation relatively easily. Though it is not so easy, still, considering the wicked nature of the environment, in a general sense one can easily renounce everything; by elimination, elimination, elimination - all elimination, for reaching something like sound sleep. That is *mukti*. Permanent sound sleep.

And we can gather our things of enjoyment by *yajna* , altruistic action. If we take altruistic action, then as a reaction they will come back to us, for our satisfaction and pleasure.

But our real wealth, Devotion to Hari, is not so easily attained. *Sadhana-sahasraih*: despite thousands of practices by the aspirant, still it is *sudurllabha*, it may or may not be acquired. Because, that is to acquire friendship with the Autocracy. Our enjoyment is 'labor and live.' If we loan some labor to another, that may come back to us. So, by the help of our labor, and by the distribution of that labor, we can easily get future enjoyment. Also, by practicing our sincere disgust with the present mortal environment, we can encourage our ego towards salvation. That is complete renunciation, cutting off all connection with the environment, *samadhi*, just like sound sleep. But to have affectionate connection with the Autocratic Infinite - that is hardly to be acquired.

Hari-bhakti-sudurllabha . And the gradual process of how one is to acquire that is also traced in *Sri-Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*:

klesa-ghni subhada moksa-laghuta-krt sudurllabha

sandrananda-visesatma sri-krsnakarsini ca sa

(Purva 1.17)

Klesa-ghni: all the afflicting tendencies in your mind gradually diminish.

So many things - the proposal of subtle finer mundane happiness may come to try and dissuade you from this path. They are obstacles, and your sincere negligence to them develops. *Subhada*: all auspiciousness is given to you.

Moksa-laghuta-krt: the third result is that you shall trace that *mukti* , the result of mere renunciation, that is, relief from the influence of the negative side, now

appears to be a very small achievement. The consciousness will awaken in you that mere withdrawal from the negative side is a very insignificant achievement.

Moksa-laghuta-krt, sudurllabha : if you can only feel or experience that the goal of renunciation is insignificant, it is of a lower order, does that mean you will get *Bhakti* ? No. There is no such guarantee. Even at that stage, *Bhakti* remains far away from you.

Sandrananda-visesatma : then if somehow by chance you come in connection with that reality, you will find some fundamental

awakening that infinite happiness is approaching you. *Sri-krsnakarsini ca sa*: and further, if you can continue your devotional activity in a proper line, you will find that He is coming to you as Krsna Himself, in the conception of Krsna consciousness. The Krsna concept is coming to you as Krsna Himself.

'Krsna' means the full embodiment of all types of ecstasy. That is approaching, or you are being allowed to have His nearer conception, as the fulfillment of your devotional activities of life. In this way, things progress.

So die to live - dive deep into reality - *jnana-sunya-bhakti*. The area of surrender is so high, noble, great and fulfilling. That can come. That can only take us in the plane of love and affection. If we hope to see and to live in that plane of affection and love, not this mundane affection and love, but the love of the Absolute, then we must accept complete surrender at His disposal, at His mercy. The reaction comes as love.

With your highest contribution of faith towards Him, He will be aroused and He will come to accept You on His lap.

So, no risk no gain; and that is risk towards the whole: Devotion proper. It is not merely a sum total of some certain activities, or a type of study - never. Practically it is concerned with the soul, with the inner existence of us. Giving and taking must take place from the innermost part of our heart. It is not a game to play with! No superficial knowledge or bodily or mental labor can touch it. It is the dealing of the heart to heart. And that is wholesale.

Jnane prayasam udapasya . In this world we are proud of our mania for knowledge and worldly energy; bodily or mental energy, and knowledge about so many falsified things. But He can withdraw everything.

Scientists may have discovered a certain law, but if He withdraws, it will be nowhere. Nothing is possible unless backed by His will. 'Let there be water, there was water; let there be light, there was light.' If we can find some faith in this, then we shall perceive that everything is designed and destined by Him. So what is the utility of some provisional incident? If He wishes, He may make or mar. The law may be reversed by His sweet will. The origin of the world is such. He is an independent designer, like a great master hypnotist.

Chapter 12 Earnestness

"If You kindly remove my blindness for a moment, I would like to see that great, noble figure of Yours that others have seen."

"No, no, it's not necessary for your blindness to be removed. If I just say 'see!' then you will see Me."

By His will, by His order, Dhrtarastra saw, without his blindness being removed. "Yes, being blind you can see me!" Despite being blind he could see, so what sort of sight is He? He can be seen only by His order.

So, neither eyes nor our mental preparation backing the eye are indispensable to see Him. He ordered Dhrtarastra, "See me!" and he could see without eyes or without the mentality of sight. Dhrtarastra was *janmandha*, blind from birth; he had no idea of any color or figure, but still he could see - by the Lord's order. His position is such; so if we try to approach Him, what should our attitude be? How much earnestness should we have to approach that land?

It is easy - it is difficult. Easy, because it is our inborn tendency. It is home. But now, we are far from home; It is home, my own, so there is hope that I may reach there one day. It is my home and I won't find satisfaction anywhere else, so I must go there, but I am far away from that home comfort. There is the difficulty - I have lost that land.

Jnane prayasam udapasya: scholarship is poison! Are you ready to admit this? All your learning is nonsense! You are plodding in the mud.

All knowledge of misrepresentation - not a bag full of money, but a bag full of rocks. The brain is taxed and filled up with all misleading things.

Are you ready to admit this? Not so soon! What do you say? Many of us boast of our knowledge. But the *Bhakti* school is striking a hammer on the head of knowledge or *jnana* . Rather, ignorance is better than knowledge! Can you accept that? Knowledge is more dangerous than ignorance!!

Why? Because the so-called learned are proud by comparison. They are more confident that they are holding a higher position, and to remove them from that position is very difficult. Qualitatively, they are in a position above the ordinary laborer, so they are confident of their superiority. So to relieve them of that proud superiority is more difficult than to relieve an ordinary laborer of his ignorance. That would be easy.

It is easy to educate an uneducated person, but to educate an 'educated' person is more difficult. He has firmly entrenched himself in his superiority, so he won't budge an inch from that position.

ei du'yera madhye visayi tabu bhala

mayavadi sanga nahi magi kona kala

(Saranagati)

The company of ordinary persons, misguided souls in the ordinary street, is somewhat better than the company and influence of the so-called scholars. That sort of subtle poison is very dangerous and difficult to remove. They're proud, thinking, "I know. I hold a higher position than the ordinary mass." That sort of fine ego is very difficult to remove.

Ordinary persons may think, "Yes, we are culprits." Also, the ego of the ordinary religious men is very difficult to remove. "Oh, I am a religious man." It is very difficult to cross his so-called faith and religion, to give him something higher. This is the practical experience, and it is also advised in *sastra* .

vedasraya nastikya-vada bauddhake adhika

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 6.168)

Half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood. As in Sankara's Mayavada, there is atheism in the garb of theism. They say so '*ham* , "I am the highest substance." They take the authority or the law as non-differentiated like zero. It cannot

assert. Therefore they cannot admit, "I am among the creation." They imagine it is possible for them to hold the higher position. There is no God. There is no such thing as God who automatically holds the highest power and all that be, because ultimately there is a region of unknown and unknowable substance, and wherever there is enlightenment as a human, a wise man, he holds the highest position. "We hold the highest position." But if we have to admit God, then we have nothing. If we are his created objects, play dolls, we have nothing. As soon as we have admitted God, then we are dispossessed of everything! So much renunciation is impossible. To hold that "I am the absolute authority" means that I am nowhere. Such self-abnegation is not so cheap! Any questions?

Devotee: What can help an intellectual to develop *sastric* (scriptural) vision?

Srila Guru Maharaj: When the sleeping aspect will be awakened, the cover will vanish automatically. Intellectualism cannot be utilized, but that real causeless eternal wealth within should be awakened and strengthened; and this cover of proud intellectualism will evaporate.

Karma and *jnana* are only foreign covers.

vasudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogah prayojitah janayaty asu vairagyam jnanan ca yad ahaitukam

(Bhagavatam, 1.2.7)

If somehow with the help of the Scriptures and His agents, the devotees or saints, we can develop our Devotion, *Bhakti*, then, the proper knowledge and proper apathy towards worldly substances will follow us.

Healthy, proper knowledge and healthy energy will come to follow us if the reality within awakens and we become adjusted by it.

This doesn't refer to the knowledge or energy found in this plane. This is entirely distinct. Energy is the capacity to work, to move. And knowledge is to have a conception. That will come in the retinue of Devotion.

Sambandha-jnana - 'what is what.' A new world will awaken within.

Misleading ideas will evaporate and retire, and the proper reading will evolve from within. *Sambandha-jnana*. "I am such and such to my Lord, and these are

the Lord's friends, the Lord's lovers, etc.; and what sort of knowledge and movement should be mine in this new environment."

In that way, readjustment will come from within. The present type of knowledge and energizing will have to retire and be dispelled like darkness. Conceptions may be utilized only when proper conception awakens. When the professor will point out our misconceptions we can learn the proper conception. "In this way you are misconceiving things; your proper conception is this; but did you misconceive this thing for that?" "Yes sir, I thought like that. Now I see the real thing is this. This is not mine. Not to speak of mine, I also belong to Krsna - my Lord."

"Everything belongs to Him; I am not a master, I am a slave. I don't hold the position of a master, not to speak of possessing so many properties.

Even I am property to another possessor." The calculation must begin from that plane, and a new land will be found. That aspiration and aggression to think one can conquer the whole world by the atomic energy is a false notion. It is suffering human intellect to think one has a position to challenge God: "God is only a superstition, an imaginary thing." We need this wholesale and radical cure: "I do not belong to me, I have my eternal master." We need slave mentality.

During the time of my Guru Maharaj's preaching, one newspaper in Calcutta complained, "Gaudiya Math is spreading slave mentality to the country - this is most objectionable. This will destroy the military spirit of the land, so they can't be encouraged to spread slavery. They have no patriotism, what are they!" The atheists cannot tolerate the call to come hither and live in Vaikuntha. They can't tolerate the spreading of this 'poison' within the country. And they hold that in *Bhagavad-gita*, Krsna supported war. But that was not from *their* standpoint.

Yada yada hi dharmasya . . . The Lord says, "Sometimes the world is so thickly attacked by the atheistic influence that I have to come down again to re-establish the religious environment here. The enemies are vanquished and the good thinkers are given certain relief in their lives. I have to come."

Sri Guru Arati-stuti

Arati Prayer to Srila Guru Maharaj

composed by

The Present President- *Acarya* Om Visnupada Tridandi Swami Sri Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj

Sri-Guru-Arati-stuti

jaya 'guru-maharaja' yatirajesvara

sri-bhakti-raksaka deva-goswami sridhara [1]

patita-pavana-lila vistari' bhuvane

nistarila dinahina apamara jane [2]

tomara karunaghana murati heriya

preme bhagyavana jiva pade murachiya [3]

sudirgha supibya deha divya-bhavasraya

divya-jnana-dipta-netra divya-jyotirmaya [4]

suvarna-suraja-kanti aruna-vasana

tilaka tulasimala, candana-bhusana [5]

apurva sri-anga-sobha kare jhalamala

audarya-unnata-bhava madhurya-ujjala [6]

acintya-pratibha, snigdha, gambhira, udara

jada-jnana-giri-vajra divya-diksadhara [7]

gaura-sankirtana-rasa-rasera asraya

"dayala nitai" name nitya premamaya [8]

sangopange gaura-dhame nitya-parakasa

gupta-govardhane divya-lilara vilasa [9]

gaudiya-acarya-gosthi-gaurava-bhajana
gaudiya-siddhanta-mani kantha-vibhusana [10]
gaura-sarasvati-sphurta siddhantera khani
aviskrta gayatrira artha-cintamani [11]
eka-tattva varnanete nitya-nava-bhava
susangati, samanjasya, e saba prabhava [12]
tomara satirtha-varga sabe eka-mate
rupa-sarasvati dhara dekhena tomate [13]
tulasi-malika haste sri-nama-grahana
dekhi'sakalera haya 'prabhu' uddipana [14]
koticandra-susitala o pada bharasa
gandharva-govinda-lilamrta-labha-asa [15]
avicintya-bhedabheda-siddhanta-prakasa!
sanande arati stuti kare dina dasa [16]

All glory to you, 'Guru Maharaj,'

Of *sannyasi* kings, the Emperor:

The glorious Srila Bhakti Raksak

Dev-Goswami Sridhar.

Extending in this world your pastimes

As savior of the fallen,

You delivered all the suffering souls,

Including the most forsaken.
Beholding your holy form
Of concentrated mercy,
The fortunate souls fall in a swoon
Of Divine Love's ecstasy.
Your lofty form of Divine Emotion
Is nectar for our eyes;
With Divine Knowledge and shining eyes,
Your effulgence fills the skies.
A golden sun resplendent,
In robes of saffron dressed;
Adorned with *tilak*, Tulasi beads,
And with sandal fragrance blessed.
The matchless beauty of your holy form,
Dazzling in its brightness;
Your benevolence of most noble heart,
In the glow of Pure Love's Sweetness.
Inconceivable genius, affection,
Gravity, magnanimity -
A thunderbolt crushing mundane knowledge,
The reservoir bestowing Divinity.

In the Golden Lord's *Sankirtan* Dance,
You revel ecstatically;
"Dayal Nitai, Dayal Nitai!"
You ever call so lovingly.
Eternally present in Nabadwip Dham
With your associates, by your sweet will,
You enjoy your holy pastimes
On hidden Govardhan Hill.
You're the fit recipient of your dignity
In the *Gaudiya Acarya* assembly,
The jewel of the *Gaudiya-siddhanta*
Adorning your chest so nobly.
You're the living message of Sri Gaura,
You're the mine of perfect conclusions;
You revealed the Gayatri's inner purport:
The gem fulfilling all aspirations.
When you speak, one subject alone
Is revealed in ever-new light;
Proper adjustment, and harmony -
All these are your spiritual might.
All your dear Godbrothers

Declare unanimously
They see within your Holiness
The line of Rupa-Saraswati.
Seeing you take the Holy Name,
With Tulasi beads in hand,
Awakens the thought of the Lord*
In everybody's mind.
Your feet, cooling like ten million moons -
In their Service all faith do I place;
The nectar of Radha-Govinda's pastimes
One day we may drink, by your grace.
O personification of perfect conclusions
Inconceivably one, yet different!
I sing this prayer at your *arati*,
With joy - your humble servant.

Pranama-mantra

to

**Om Visnupad Astottara-sata-Sri-Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-
Goswami Maharaj**

by Srila Sri Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj

sri-svarupa-rayarupa jiva-bhava-sambharam

varna-dharma-nirvisesa-sarvaloka-nistaram

sri-sarasvati-priyan ca bhakti-sundarasrayam

sridharam namami bhakti-raksakam jagad-gurum

sindhu-candra-parvatendu-saka-janma-lilanam

suddha-dipta-raga-bhakti-gauravanusilanam

bindu-candra-ratna-soma-saka-locanantaram

sridharam namami bhakti-raksakam jagad-gurum

I offer my humble obeisances unto the Guru of the entire world, Om Visnupad Sri Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, who carries the conception of Sri Svarupa Damodara, Sri Ramananda Raya, Sri Rupa Goswami and Sri Jiva Goswami; who delivers everyone

irrespective caste or creed; who is the most beloved of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada; and who is the abode of Transcendental Loving Service [the only shelter of Sri Bhakti Sundar Govinda].

I offer my humble obeisances unto the Guru of the entire world, Om Visnupad Sri Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, who revealed the Pastimes of his Holy Advent in the world in the year 1817

Saka era [1895 A.D.]; who constantly practices the wealth of Pure Loving Devotion in Divine Consorhood; and who disappeared from our eyes in the year 1910 Saka era [1988 A.D.].

The Guardian of Devotion and His Divine Servitor

by Tridandi Bhiksu Sri Bhakti Ananda Sagar

Bhakti means 'Devotion,' and Raksaka means 'guardian.' Situated within the Holy province known by the devotees as 'Gauda-mandal,' the humble village of Hapaniya has now become a cherished place of pilgrimage for theistic scholars

and pilgrims the world over. Small wonder, since it is the Holy Place of Advent of Om Visnupad Astottara-sata-Sri Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, the Great Grandfather of all the faithful Vaisnava *Tridandi Sannyasins* , the Grand Preceptor of the Divine Nectarine Message of Sri Gaurangadev. This great saintly personage made his glorious Advent at Sripat Hapaniya of Radh-desh, in 1895 of the Christian calendar. The formidable scholar Sriyukta Upendra Chandra Bhattacharya Vidyaratna Mahodoy and Srimati Gauridevi, were both unalloyed pure souls imbued with righteousness and devotion for the Supreme Lord Hari. At the fitting auspicious moment, Srila Guru Maharaj made his Advent, choosing them as his father and mother, and revealing the advent of his Divine Pastimes to the world. They named their beloved son Sri Ramendra Chandra Bhattacharya.

In 1923 he was attracted by the Grace of Sri Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami, and at the Sri Gaudiya Math situated at No. 1

Ultadingi Junction Road, Calcutta, he heard Sri Srila Prabhupada's Holy Talks of the Supreme Lord. Not long after that, in December of 1926, with full surrender he joined Sri Gaudiya Math. The natural attraction for the Nama-sankirtana of Sri Chaitanyadev that Srila Guru Maharaj had felt since his very childhood now bloomed into the resplendent personality of Tridandi Sannyasin Sri Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj, at the behest of Sri Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami.

Srila Prabhupada conferred this Holy Order, Name and Title upon Srila Sridhar Maharaj in the year 1930, having marked his profound expertise and depth of divine realization in the Holy Scriptural Theistic Conclusions, thus recognizing him as a veritable 'Guardian of Devotion.'

Srila Prabhupada further solidified this recognition upon hearing Srila Sridhar Maharaj's Sanskrit composition *Sri-Bhaktivinoda-viraha-dasakam* , when he endorsed the Holy Poem as a direct inspiration of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Srila Sridhar Maharaj took a prominent part in the founding, organizing and preaching of many of the Sri Gaudiya Maths of Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami all over India. As a climax to his Divine Affection and Blessings to Srila Sridhar Maharaj, during the last days of Srila Prabhupada's manifest Divine Pastimes in this world, he especially selected Srila Sridhar Maharaj to sing *Sri Rupa-manjari-pada* for him, which is well-known as

the most venerated and adored Prayer of the entire *Gaudiya Sampradaya* ; by this action we can know Srila Prabhupada's indomitable confidence in his 'Guardian of Devotion' as the future Captain of the *Sri-Rupanuga Sampradaya* or Divine Succession of Faithful Followers of Sri Chaitanyadev in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami. And who could doubt this? The nectarine river of Sanskrit and Bengali compositions that flowed from his pen stand as great monuments in the line of Sri Chaitanyadev. In his latter years some hundreds of disciples of the late World Preacher, Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, flocked to Sri Nabadwip Dham to hear the holy informal talks and advices of Srila Sridhar Maharaj, and from tape-recordings of those talks many English publications reached to the Western public, scholars and devotees. The wholehearted acceptance of his Divine Delivery and those Transcendental Works by the genuine devotees is irrevocable, not only by dint of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj's openly avowed acceptance of Srila Sridhar Maharaj as his *Siksa-Guru* , but simply by the strength of their own spiritual merit. Therefore great numbers of sincere seekers from all over the world also flocked to the Lotus Feet of Srila Sridhar Maharaj to become surrendered disciples of the Guardian of Devotion.



Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume Three

All Glories to the Divine Master and the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna Chaitanya

From informal talks by

Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev Gosvami Maharaj

Chapter 1 The Question

yac chrotavyam atho japyam yat karttavyam nrbhih prabho

smarttavyam bhajaniyam va bruhi yad va viparyyayam

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.19.38)

King Pariksit asked: "We are exercising our senses in this plane but what will be most beneficial for us? We are receiving things from outside to meet the demand of our internal self, but what will be the best utility of our senses? Which things should we imbibe within ourselves for our best interest? We are always accepting something from the environment for the inner interest. Now how should we utilize our senses, the channel of our knowledge, that they may best help our inner interest?"

Pariksit Maharaj put his question to Sukadeva, and Sukadeva accepted saying,

*variyan esa te prasnah krto loka-hitam nrpa atmavit-samrnatah pumsam
srotavyadisuh yah parah*

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.1)

"Yes it is a real question because two inherent signs of enquiry are here. Firstly, it is a general question: to find the solution is necessary for every one of us, and the answer to it will help us all. Secondly, one who already has proper knowledge of his own self will also accept this question to be most relevant. So, one sanction comes from the subjective realm, and another sanction is that it is good for the whole public. Such questions are real questions of universal interest, the solution of which will help every one of the enquirers, and not only with any partial or provincial solution, but with the absolute solution which will help solve the problem of the whole. It is *the* question that should be asked by anyone and everyone in this world. So, yes your question is bona fide. It will solve not only your problem but it will give the general solution to the whole problem of the entire world.

This is *the* question to be solved, the only question. The general population do not have any perfect knowledge and so do not know what is what, therefore their enquiry may be faulty. One may therefore conclude that the public are always wrong. Since the masses are ignorant their questions may not be the proper ones.

The demand of the majority may be erroneous. It cannot be admitted that *vox populi* is *vox dei*." So it is necessary that there be intrinsic purity in the question.

Therefore Sukadeva said that those who really understand their own position will also accept and give their sanction to this question as to what is our best benefit and how we can utilize our senses to draw knowledge from the environment so it will help us to the best advantage. It is passed by the subject-committee of the higher section who have faultless knowledge. They are infallible and they will give their sanction that this is a relevant question.

Sukadeva Goswami continued, "So, from two sides, from the upper and lower, they will accept your question as relevant. I am going to answer. You try to listen with perfect attention."

srotavyadini rajendra nrrnam santi sahasrasah apasyatam atma-tattvam grhesu grha-medhinam

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.2)

"Oh King, there is no end of ways by which we can utilize our senses.

There are thousands of engagements by which all the senses are kept so busy that they find no time for leisure. They are mostly all engaged in serving those that do not know the true necessity of the real self.

Those who do not know their own want and home are travelling in a foreign land endlessly working to try to satisfy their curiosity. There is no proper diagnosis but they are very busy in treatment: that is the situation to be found in the world. But self-realization, *atma-tattvam*, is such an important thing."

One of proper, normal understanding will therefore accept the necessity of revealed truth. Revealed truth does not rely on the majority consideration of the abnormal thinkers. *Srauta-pantha* means revealed truth, and that must come from the perfect realm: from God Himself. So here is established the indispensable necessity of the *Srauta-pantha*, the method of revelation. It must come from the perfect realm, from *sarvajna*, from the quarter of omniscience. We find that there are thousands of engagements in those that are unconscious of their own real interest. They are very busy, but very busy about nothing. What do we see if we look around?

nidraya hriyate naktam vyavayena ca va vayah diva

carthehaya rajan kutumba-bharanena va

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.3)

"At night we see two things; either sleep or playing with women. And the the day-time is spent either in search of money or by serving the relatives."

dehapatya-kalatradisv atma-sainyesv asatsv api tesam

pramatto nidhanam pasyann api na pasyati

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.4)

"In this world we tend to group with those we can exploit. We are surrounded by those who supply our sense enjoyment, our sense pleasure. We are fully engrossed in their interest and only use them for our own sense pleasure. We are so much engrossed in that sort of false duty that we have not the leisure to find out about our own death that is drawing near towards us. Seeing, but not seeing. It is a plain thing: everyone is going to the jaws of death with the mood, I see but still I can't see. I don't care to see and so I don't see. And this is the peculiar position I hold now. The danger, the final danger is approaching and I am asleep to that. I don't care to take notice of that greater duty.' What can be more strange than this?"

King Pariksit had only seven days more to live but Sukadeva Goswami told him: "You say that you have no time, only seven days.

But that does not matter at all. Seven days is time enough, only the necessity is your particular attention for the solution. Only a moment is enough. There are so many trees, mountains and hills, they are living years and years, ages after ages, but to no benefit. So what is the necessity of such a long life? It is not a question of longevity or a question of time but what is necessary is the attention to one's own self: 'What am I and what is mine?' With that sort of attitude our attention will be drawn to our own real interest. That is the factor, and not the question of time. There is enough time."

So seven days is enough, but the peculiar necessity is to find out how our attention can be drawn towards the reality. When that is discovered, then and

there our real interest will be satisfied. And only by *sadhu-sanga*, the association of the higher, highly realized souls, is that possible."

*khatvango nama rajarsir jnatveyattam ihayusah muhurtat sarvvam utsrjya
gatavan abhayam harim*

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.13)

In history we find a precedent in Maharaj Khatvanga. He had only one moment left of his life but he so perfectly engaged himself that he gave himself for ever to the Lord. Without any reservation he surrendered to the feet of the Lord and he achieved the desired end.

He achieved Hari. And who is Hari? *Abhayam*: when we get Him, then all apprehension, all fear and every undesirable thing will be vanquished for ever. That is the meaning of 'Hari.' 'Hari' means *saccidananda* eternal existence, perfect consciousness and also the fulfillment of life in ecstatic joy. Maharaj Khatvanga achieved all that within a moment!

sarvva-dharmman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja

(Bhagavad-gita 18.66)

So the problem is, how can we surrender, giving up our mundane attraction and our ignorance about our own interest? How can we jump into the Absolute Good - the ocean of our real interest? That is the problem and our questions should be of such a general character.

Only there is this one question.

It is admitted by all that everyone wants the maximum happiness whether he be a stone, a tree, or any species up to the demigods, the *rsis* and *munis*: That is the only thing to be aspired for. Then how to attain it? What and who is the Lord? That is to be discussed and conceived. What is He? What am I? What is my end? How to reach the goal? What is the destination and how to reach the destination?

Sambandha, *prayojana* and *abhidheya*. Under these three headings the Vedic Scriptures have discussed the whole problem. Who am I?

Where am I? Then what is my best benefit—the goal—and how to attain it?

Divine relationship, practice and objective— *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*—it is all to be discussed under these three headings.

This is the general question. It is the question of everyone. It is not any partial thing and it has nothing to do with any sectarian or provincial interests, or anything of the kind. No such things can come against this campaign of the Gaudiya Math. Mahaprabhu began His campaign against Maya—misunderstanding—and, to the conscious, saner section, that is the very thing of general demand in the world.

The standard is not with the insane but it is with the saner section; they all will welcome the movement that was inaugurated by Swami Maharaj over the whole globe. And our Guru Maharaj began that attempt to attack Maya, the illusory energy, and to devastate and smash it. This is *kirttana*, this is preaching.

This is *Harinama*. And Mahaprabhu came here with this: "Don't fly away, don't run away for fear of Maya, misunderstanding. Ultimately it is misunderstanding but you want reality, so why should you be

afraid? Your basis is a real one - you are standing on fundamental reality so you should not be afraid and run to the jungle or to the cave.

Even there, you will also always be afraid that Maya will enter. That is not being a bold soldier of the *sankirttana* party fearlessly wandering through the length and breadth of the world and chanting about Krsna, about truth. Truth! Take up that missionary work and Maya won't venture to approach you, for Maya is misunderstanding.

By repeating your Krsna consciousness to others you will generate the truthful consciousness. With the help of Krsna consciousness you will be able to do away with everything infectious by spreading and distributing the disinfecting substances. That will be your duty. Be an agent of the disinfecting section who are throwing around the medicine to disinfect the infectious area. Be such an agent and thereby drive away infection from all around. If you go on in that way then infection cannot approach you. Because you are distributing disinfectant all around you, the infection cannot come to attack you, and at the same time others will also be saved."

There is only one necessity: the necessity to spread Krsna consciousness. And our object is *Prema*. *Prema* means to acquire more energetic tendency to spread

higher and higher levels of Krsna consciousness. '*Dasa kari' vetana more deha prema-dhana*:'

Prema will help us more intensely to engage in service—to serve, and to get the remuneration as *Prema*. The nature of *Prema* is that it will excite us more and more for service. It will move in a circular way: what we receive as remuneration will be the tendency to produce more service to the object of our reverence. That is *Prema*. *Prema* is not a separate thing from service, but it will help us more and more towards service. So it is continuous, it is dynamic. It is not that, "I have acquired *Prema*, now I am like a king and shall enjoy it—now there is no longer any necessity of service." Such a stage will never come, rather *Prema* will promote the speed and quality of the service. Love will actuate us more and more towards the service of the object of our love. So service will acquire *Prema*, and *Prema* will induce us to serve. That is our object of life.

Chapter 2 Finer than Matter

We find that certain Scriptures such as the *Upanisads* give mere Statements with no rhyme or reason; with no explanation or certification attached. This is because such knowledge is meant for the higher level where there is no possibility of any deception. whatever is said there is taken by the listeners as complete truth. There is no room for doubt because in that higher civilized plane there is no possibility of any deception. The *Upanisads* say: "This means so and so," and the natural response comes, "Yes, it is so." There is no *tarka* (reasoning), and no doubt or anything of the kind because the very plane itself is such that deception is unknown. So, in the case of the *Veda* and *Upanisads* we are cautioned: *acintyah khalu ye bhava na tams tarkena yojayet*. "Don't take your reasoning and doubt into that higher stage. It is unnecessary there where there is only plain speaking and fair dealing with no trouble from anyone wanting to deceive another.

Deception and unfair dealings are unknown there." This is the level of the *Vedas* and *Upanisads* where rhyme and reason are unnecessary.

But in a lower stage, the *Smṛti* and *Puranas* come to give their advice in another mood. The *Puranas* are like friends, advising, "Do this and you will be benefitted." They give examples, "This person acted in such a way and received a good result; but this other did bad things and a bad result followed. So, my friend, please learn from this."

Then, the *Sruti* comes to our help by showing us how to apply these truths in our everyday life.

The *kavya* also approaches us and comes in a very sweet manner like an affectionate wife to advise: "Do this, it will be very good for you.."

But the *Vedas* take another approach: *acintyah khalu ye bhava nastam tarkena yojayet*. This subject matter does not come within the jurisdiction of doubt, reasoning and so on. Don't drag all these worthy things into such a sphere."

In a lecture I gave an example to illustrate this. A mother gives a sweet to her son, she puts it in his hand but he says, "Oh, it may be poisoned! I must go to the laboratory and examine it." It is a deplorable thing and a very low type of civilization where such an attitude prevails. But in such a plane where affectionate and fair dealing is unknown, *tarka*, *vicara* and *yukti* (discrimination); doubt, examination and inspection are all present. But that is really a filthy life. There is *Krsna-smṛti* and its opposite, *deha-smṛti*.

deha-smṛti nahi yara, samsara-kupa kahan tara, taha haite na cahe uddhara

(*Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya 13.142*)

One who is unconscious of his material body has no worldly material connection. We are conscious of our material body and therefore have come in connection with the atmosphere of the material world. If we are independent of this material body then we have no connection with the mortal world. This is the medium between the material world and the *atma*, the soul. The mental system makes the first connection, then comes this body consciousness.

After Sukadeva Goswami finished giving his *Bhagavata* discourse, in his conclusion he gave warning to the audience, especially Parikṣit Maharaj, *tvam tu rajan marisyeti, pasu-buddhim imam jahi*

(*Bhagavatam, 12.5.2*).

"Oh King, do not think you will die—give up this animal consciousness. Eliminate it fully from your thought and do not allow your attention to come down to any material conception.

Remain in your own soul conception. Take your stand firmly there.

Why do you allow yourself to come down to the conception of this matter: the world, your body and all these things? It is unnecessary. Don't allow your attention to come down to material consciousness, you are independent of that. Think of your soul, its higher achievement and prospect. Your transaction must be all upwards; stick to that. You, the soul, are independent of these.

Free from matter you can live and move very happily. To think it not possible to stay without a body is animal consciousness, *pasu-buddhi*.

What is this! Why do you allow yourself to come into this consciousness of matter which is mortal? Don't allow yourself to come down, to have experience of this material world. This is animal consciousness. You must kill it, butcher it! *Tvam turdjan marisyeti, pasu-buddhim imam jahi*. To think, I shall die is animal consciousness. Just kill it once and for all. At the same time try to soar up from soul to over-soul, and beyond to the Narayana conception and onwards to the Krsna conception. Try to live in the connection of Vraja and the Divine Damsels there who are all serving Krsna.

Consider how they are so recklessly engaged in serving the sweet will of their Lord. Each one of them is always prepared and is the emblem of sacrifice."

In Hitler's army there was a suicide squad who were always prepared for anything and everything. Similarly the Vraja Gopis are ready to give up everything for the slightest satisfaction of Krsna. They are prepared to sacrifice at a second's notice not only their whole body but their entire prospect of everything in their connection. Fully risking everything, they have this highest standard of preparedness for the service of Krsna - and that is the highest standard of life. In them we find sacrifice to the extreme. Sacrifice for the good, sacrifice for the Absolute Good, the Absolute Beauty, Bliss and Ecstasy. Your abode will be very near to Him according to your degree and intensity of sacrificing attitude. This is the close approach. By sacrifice we live.

By enjoying we lose. By serving we thrive and by enjoying we lose.

And the position of renunciation is zero: no loss, no gain - but in comparison with the positive acquisition it is loss. When there is no gain then that is a loss. Renunciation, *mukti*, salvation, mere liberation - by whatever name it is called - is a loss in comparison with the positive attainment of a servitor.

Reality is for itself. It is for nothing else than He. We are for Him - our existence

is meant only for Him. Our purpose is to serve Him. He is the integer. He is existing. He is all in all, and we are all subservient. So we are to dissolve our body consciousness, this animal consciousness.

In a dream a man may see that his beheaded body is fallen before him; but that does not affect his existence or his perception. The soul has a similar connection with this world. It is not affected. In a dream he may see that although his body may be pulverized and the earth vanish from under his feet he remains unaffected. Similarly the soul's position is independent. It is not dependent on material existence but it thinks that material things are indispensably necessary to maintain its existence. But this is wrong and a concoction. To stand on a material conception is not necessary for the soul. Although that worldly conception seems to be so very indispensable for our being, it is not so. We are independent from matter. Even the mental existence is independent of this gross material existence what to speak of that of the soul. Soul has nothing to do with this matter which is a foreign, concocted, dream-like substance. Rather, the material conception is poison to the soul and is drawing him in the opposite direction from his real interest.

The Mayavadis and the Buddhists consider that with the dissolution of the material conception nothing remains. And Sankara says that only some non-differentiated consciousness remains in which no individual conception can stand. But the Vaisnavas say, "No, there is a world of reality made of higher stuff than your soul. Your soul is made of vulnerable consciousness, but there is a world of invulnerable consciousness. If you can manage to enter there you will be happy, and only with the interest of rendering service there can you gain such entrance to that land. That sort of adaptability is within you. That is your *svarupa*, your true nature. The adaptability to the positive life is inherent within the soul. You are to blossom and bloom and when full-blown you will reach the Goloka stage."

Wrongly, we have adapted to matter and this has drawn us into the negative side, therefore we are wandering in different stages. This fallen condition is not only unnecessary but is injurious to the soul.

Just as by taking water from in front and sending it behind him a swimmer we can make progress, so also by hearing and chanting, we can make progress. *Sravaṇa-kīrtana-jale (Chaitanya charitamrita, 19.152)*. We are to hear, and what we acquire we are to distribute to others. A swimmer makes quick progress

by passing behind him the water in his front, similarly, in spiritual terms we are to receive from the capitalist and deliver that to the customers. *Sravana kirttana, sravana, kirttana...* By imbibing and exporting we can make good progress and the Absolute Capitalist will supply as much as the customers can receive from Him. This is Mahaprabhu's advice. *Yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa (Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 7.128)*: "Deliver these goods to anyone and everyone and new light will come to you which in turn you are to distribute to others. In this way you will have a dynamic and progressive life and there will be no shortage of higher backing."

Swami Maharaj invoked assistance from Krsna. He petitioned Him, "Please come to my help. I have been ordered by Your favourite to do this duty. Please help me. After finishing this duty I shall again join Your play in Vrndavana. There we shall play; we shall run, we shall jump and we shall do anything and everything in a boistrous way together. But for now I have some duty which is necessary to discharge and that duty has been ordered by Your most favourite person. If You help me to carry this out then Your friend, that most favourite friend, will be pleased with You and so You will get some advantage thereby!" In this way he made his petition, *krsna tava punya habe bhai*, "You will acquire good merit if You help me!"

Krsna supported Govarddhan Hill with the little finger of His left hand, and afterwards His friends, the cowherd men and boys told Him, "You did not hold it alone, we also helped You with our sticks! Be reminded of it. You could not do it alone!" They share the pleasure, and also they do not care to think about His extraordinary majesty, power and so forth. They feel, "He is one of us but very beautiful, and we cannot live without Him. We don't know why it is, but somehow if He is not in our midst we are all lifeless, and when He comes we become enlivened like anything." He is their very life and they consider, "He possesses some peculiar power no doubt, but still He is one of us."

If they should hear that He is God, then, "No, no, He can't be God, wo don't admit that. Rather He is our friend. Who says He is God? We don't care for such grand claims. He is our friend, our very charming friend."

Mother Yasoda also thinks, "He is my son but some people don't like that I live in peace, so they say He is God and He is this and He is that. Why do they say such things? He is my child but they are so jealous and envious that they do not like that I may stay living peacefully with my son and husband. They are so

envious that they say He is God and He is so-and-so. No! Simply He is my child, only they are unable to tolerate that I have such a beautiful child and therefore they air so many different types of speculation. I don't like these things and this is all a little ominous for my child. Why should He go to be a god? Human beings are real!" *krsnera yateka khela sarvottama nara-lila nara-vapu tdhdra svarilpa*. Mahaprabhu taught that the human society is so valuable because Krsna is originally in this form. This human society is created after His original social style and therefore it is so important, *sarvottama nara-lila, nara-vapu tahara svarupa*.

It is accepted in this world that the human creation is the highest. But the materialists all think, "We are masters of the fossil world. We don't have to give any explanation for our activity to anyone. We are the masters." That is the materialists' scientific standpoint. But sometimes they are afraid, "If higher cultured people are in *sukra-graha* or any other star, should they come here, then we are nowhere.

If in a flying saucer they should come once to attack us with any new types of weapons then we are nowhere."

But before this they may fight with one another with atom bombs and destroy everything. Suicidal! This is, after all, the suicidal plane, the discordant plane where one cannot live without devouring his environment. That is the law of this land. If you want to live here then you must devour your environment otherwise you can't survive. So it is the suicidal plane. One is eating another and only then he can live, that too is only for the time being. So is this a proper land to live in?

Prasada— that is the highest solution! The principle necessities of any life here in this world are to preserve and to propagate. Our first priority is to preserve, and for self-preservation we create havoc in the environment by exploitation. The first principle of exploitation begins from the urge for self-preservation, and that means eating. We are to adjust our dealings with the environment in our most primitive necessity which we can't avoid in order to keep body and soul together. So if we can solve this one difficulty, we can almost solve the whole problem.

Prasada-seva korite hoye, sakala prapanca jaya— Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur says that the key to the solution of the whole problem of this mundane life is in *Prasada*. The first necessity of life is eating, and if we can solve that problem,

we have solved the whole thing. *Prasada-seva korite hoyā, sakalā prapaṅcā jayā*— the most important thing is to learn how we should take *Prasadam* to maintain ourselves. Our life depends mainly on that.

To live here we cannot but consume, and we cannot but create devastation in the environment by our eating. If we go to consume anything, even plants, grasses or seeds, then microscopic creatures are being killed. So the question is how to get rid of this reaction? It is said in *Srīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (3.9):

yajñārthat karmāṇo 'nyatra, loka 'yam karma-bandhanah— we shall get relief from that reaction only if we can successfully connect everything with the Supreme Satisfaction, with Him whose pleasure all existence is meant to fulfil. So, in the taking of food, really we are to be conscious that we are collecting the ingredients for His satisfaction, and then cooking and offering to Him for His satisfaction - that should be our real purpose. And then because our whole life and energy is for serving Him, we need energy and must take something out of that. But the main point, the real substance of the transaction will be to collect, cook, and offer to Him according to His will expressed in the Scriptures. That is the first step, and only after the foodstuffs have been offered to Him shall we take anything ourselves. This will help to make us always conscious of why we are taking. We are taking because we want only to serve Him. Furthermore, whatever has been accepted by the Lord, the 'poison,' the bad reaction, will have been absorbed and digested by Him just as in the case of Mahadeva who drank the poison generated from the Ocean of Milk.

Kṛṣṇa is absolute and can digest anything. Not only that, but those things which have been consumed in His connection also receive promotion, so actually there is no *himsa*, violence. What appears to be *himsa* is not really so, because those whom are apparently violently treated actually receive a high promotion through connection with the Supreme. In addition whoever has been instrumental in fulfilling that connection will also receive some reward. So the devotee must think, "What shall I take? I won't take anything from the world, I shall take only from my Master, as His grace. It is His grace. His free grace to me— *Prasada*."

The word *Prasada* means 'kindness,' 'grace.' The devotee will feel, "Whatever service I do, I am not expecting anything to be paid to me in return. It is a free transaction. And whatever I receive is only His grace. So I shall take *Prasada*, then I shall be free from all entanglement of action and reaction even though I am in the midst of it. Because it is a fact that with every action I must disturb the

environment, then if all my actions are meant for Him, the Supreme Lord, there will be no bad reaction coming to me, but rather the opposite reaction will occur and help not only me but those that were offered also. Through me, through myself as a centre, such waves will emanate that will help others to progress in their path of purification."

So, through the godliness in his heart, everyone must be a purifying agent. God is on the throne of the heart, and from there He will emanate such a fine ray which will purify not only that person's heart, but also the environment.

'Vaisnava' means a purifying agent who emanates goodness, absolute goodness, everywhere - through his movements, his words, his actions, everything: deed, thought and word, *kaya, mana, vakya*. A Vaisnava is an agent of auspiciousness; *te vaisnavah bhuvanamasu pavitrayanti*. There are so many Vaisnavas, and by their chanting the Holy Name, by all their practices and by their whole lives, they are like so many purifying agents.

By proper knowledge, proper dealings and proper conduct they set everything in its proper position and create adjustment in the domain of maladjustment. This world is maladjusted, and the balancing agents, the unifying factors, are the Vaisnavas. Just as there is a germ, a virus which spreads a particular contagious disease, so there must be the opposite of that, something which emanates only a pure and healthy atmosphere, and that is the Vaisnava.

Chapter 3 Personal Glimpses

Devotee: Please can you tell us how you happened to meet your Srila Guru Maharaj, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There is some background to our first meeting.

When I was at school I had some appreciation for the students from East Bengal because I had heard from one of my cousins about their sacrifice for their country and so forth. So during my college days I would take my seat in that hostel where they generally lived. When I came in the association of the students there I found there to be two sections. Many were studying medicine. If any patient was admitted or any other physical duty was required one section would immediately run to meet those requirements. Another section was inclined to be engaged in meditation, chanting the Holy Names, doing *sandhya* (worship), and so forth but they would hate to attend to any patient or other such duties.

My own nature was inclined to both kinds of duties, and when I was a fourth year student I suddenly met a boy from the first year who was similarly inclined. He would engage himself in meditation, *sandhya*, etc. He would take the Name and sing the praises of the Lord, but also if any patient should be admitted he

would forget his class and studies and attend to him. That attracted me towards him and I tried to gain his association.

One morning we were going to the jungle to collect twigs in order to cleanse our teeth when in the course of our talk he said suddenly about his father. He referred to him as, "That gentleman." I protested that it was disrespectful to use such a term for his respectable father.

Then he said, "Yes, I should not have mentioned in that way in your presence, but ultimately it is really so. Where was I in my previous lives? Only he is a 'gentleman' to me because it is only in this life that I have come in his house."

Somehow that touched a fine chord in me and I began to think, "Yes it is right. Nobody can stay here; not the father, the mother, the brothers or even this house. Everything is temporarily connected and I am wandering in eternity." That sort of impression came in me in a very, very intense form, and the whole world became as if it was just empty - fully empty. At that time that boy anyhow connected me with the life of Mahaprabhu.

Presently I was given a publication about Sri Chaitanyadeva by the gentleman who founded the Amrta Bazar Patrika newspaper. Into my thirsty mind I drank fully the life of Mahaprabhu with much pleasure, and my attraction was drawn to Him. I also think that from my previous life there was some attraction. I found that my mother's family had some connection with Mahaprabhu but my father's family were anti-Gauranga. They were strictly *smartta brahmanas*, worshippers of the Sakti, or Goddess, and logicians of the *nyaya* school. But somehow, I had connection with Gaurariga and then I came to want a good connection with the His devotees. I searched for such a *sadhu* to accept as my Gurudeva, but I was not satisfied and in due course I went to study law in Calcutta. Then, leaving college I joined with the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. I joined temporarily because I considered that my fate was already tied with Mahaprabhu and therefore could not give anyone my whole life's energy. After six years the movement allowed me temporary leave.

I was in search of a Gurudeva. The founder of Bharat Seva Asram was the same age as myself. His name was Paramananda. That boy whom I had met in college was connected with him and so I also met him, but he was a *karmmi*. He tried his best to take me within his fold. I answered him, "No, my head is already sold to Gauranga Mahaprabhu."

He said, "Yes I also recognize Gaurariga Mahaprabhu to be the highest, but first it is necessary to follow the *vairagya*, the indifference and renunciation of Buddha, then the discussion of the *Vedanta* of Sankara, and after that the highest is the *Prema* of Sri Chaitanyadeva. Without following each step, that *Prema* would be misunderstood by the ordinary section."

He explained in that way, and of course I was very much pleased to hear him giving such position to Mahaprabhu. But I put to him this question: "You say that first we must pass through the stages given by Buddha and then Sankara and only then come to Chaitanyadeva, but Chaitanyadeva did not say, 'If you want to come to Me, come through Buddha and Sankara and then to Me.' Rather He said, 'Wherever you are you can take the Name with the company of the *sadhu* and in that way you will come to Me.' He did not say, 'First become Buddhist, then become Sankarite and then you will come to Me.' He did not say so." He became silent.

I asked him, "If you have some *siddhi*, you please say where is my Gurudeva." Then he gave some idea: "Go to that particular gentleman." By his request I went there but that man was not present.

Then one day I found that there was a placard advertising a one month festival in the Gaudiya Math at No.1 Ultadingi Junction Road near Poresanath Temple. I went to visit that place thinking that having the name 'Gaudiya' they must have some connection with Sri Chaitanyadeva, and I found, "Yes, they are educated men. It is a gentleman's association and they are well studied in Scripture as well as being very good practitioners."

In our family of course there was no intoxication and they followed so many other pure practices, and I found also such conduct there at the Gaudiya Math. But what attracted me most was their deep knowledge of the Scriptures. I had done some studying but still I felt myself to be in a lower position concerning knowledge of the *Bhagavad-gita*, *Bhagavatam*, Sriman Mahaprabhu, etc. Their high regard for the Scriptures attracted me very much. I began to go there to hear, and gradually became inspired.

I had some objections in the beginning but I found that what those devotees gave was correct, and my conception was wrong. In this way I gained understanding and inspiration by hearing more and more.

Whenever anything was said to them from the Scriptures they would come to listen very carefully. But if something was said quoting Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Ramakrsna, Gandhi, etc. it was summarily rejected, "No, no, we have no time to lose. We have no time to waste to hear all this." But whenever there was reference to any Scriptures their reaction was, "Yes, what do you say? Please express it."

What attracted me most was that they had within them such devout appreciation for the Scriptures and for the risis, as was also in me perhaps to an overflowing degree. Thereby gradually I discovered the real meaning of *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* for which already I had great appreciation and reverence. I was pleased to find that they are very much part of this Mission and I learnt amongst other things that Sri Chaitanyadeva and Sri *Caitanya-caritamrta* are the highest authority.

I then entered into the Mission. Whatever misunderstandings I had, gradually cleared. I was converted, so much so that even the senior men used to ask me, "What Srila Prabhupada has said, please repeat it for our clarification." And I would repeat, reproducing for them what I had heard from Srila Prabhupada, and they were satisfied. In this way I came to such a position that generally the educated section began to say, "Sridhar Maharaj can represent the things very well."

One respectable gentleman similarly said, "In a very concise form he can represent the very substance and without any excitement."

There are some who when they say something show signs of excitement, but in a sober temperament I would try to deliver the substance using only a few words. I was not very pushing, not forward, but rather my nature was to hang behind. I would not try to go ahead and be in the front, but it would be as though I was playing from behind. That was my nature, keeping myself back, and more busy for my own realizations as to the meanings of the different *slokas of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Caitanya-caritamrtam, etc.* Generally I would meditate on the meanings of the various *slokas*. Sometimes also I would perhaps receive some new illumination and understanding concerning the meaning of the higher plane. In this way I passed my days.

I first came across Swami Maharaj a little later in Allahabad when he was the agent of Kartti Bose of Bengal Chemicals. Then in the Bombay Math also I had

his company for a long time. But the main association I had with him was in Calcutta after the departure of our Guru Maharaj. I opened a centre there in the house next to his, which was also owned by him. Downstairs there was a laboratory and on the first floor there were four rooms that I took on sublease from him. I stayed there for some time. He used to come almost every day and we had discussions about the inner meanings and teachings of *Bhagavad-gita*. Briefly we discussed other things also, but mainly our discussions were based on the *Bhagavad-gita*. Govinda Maharaj was there all along. Hari Charan Prabhu was a newcomer then and he also was there for some time. Govinda Maharaj was very much liked by Swami Maharaj who often mentioned, "I saw him as my child."

That was how I became connected with the Gaudiya Math and joined in the Mission.

Devotee: Srila Guru Maharaj, what inspired you to compose the book *Sri-Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Much later when I left the association of the disciples of our Srila Prabhupada to live alone, I felt some sort of helplessness within me. I knew that *Sarandgati*, surrender, is the indispensable necessity in the life of a devotee, and felt, "I have left, or somehow or other I am excluded from the company of Prabhupada's association. I am helpless, but *Sarandgati* may come to my relief." So I especially came to think, "*Saranagati* is the basis, but what is *Saranagati*?"

On reading Bhaktivinoda Thakur's book *Saranagati*, this point impressed me most. He wrote,

sad anga saranagati haibe yanhara tanhara prarthana sune sri nanda-kumara

"If you want Nanda Kumar, you must have this six-fold *Saranagati**,

I wanted to culture that, so at that time after coming to live alone I recollected all I had imbibed in my Math life, and also consulted about *Sarandgati* in *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, in Jiva Goswami's *Bhakti-sandarbha*, and in the Ramanuja *Sampradaya*'s writings. I then tried to collect it all together and arrange it in a particular way as I thought best. In this way I began to write the book *Sri-Sri Prapannajivanamrtam* that it may also help others who might come in such a position as mine. That was the real reason.

The six limbs of *Saranagati* are: i) acceptance of the favourable; ii) rejection of the unfavourable; iii) full confidence in the Lord's protection; iv) embracing the Lord's guardianship; v) full self-surrender; and, vi) surrender in humility.

Devotee: What is the meaning of its title?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The title *Sri-Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam* means, *prapannanam, jivane, amrta-svarupam*, "The nectar in the life of the surrendered souls." This was my conception from the beginning *prapanna-jivanamrta* - that those who have come to take this, to feel it, this will be like nectar to them. To those who have surrendered, it will be nectar to *them*, but others, the ordinary people, may not appreciate it.

It will be the nectar in the life of those who have surrendered, those who have the real *adhikara*, the proper qualified standard of faith to receive it. Srila Jiva Goswami wrote, "Those who have faith in the *Veda*, in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and such things, *they* are to read this book; otherwise, I put a curse, that those who do not have such faith should not come to read my book." Jiva Goswami has written in such a way: "You unbelievers won't come to touch my book. You who are unbelievers, it is not meant for you! It is only for those who have faith in such things. Others are discarded. You, the ordinary public are discarded. You must not touch my book because you will misunderstand it."

This is also a custom of proper behaviour. If one goes to venture to read such things, at least he must approach with some caution, and not with the mood of curiosity, "Oh, why does he say this?" for that will be dangerous. So, *adhikari nirnaya*— that whoever will come to read the *Veda*, if he has not attained the standard, he will misunderstand, or mutilate it.

Paroksa-vado vedo 'yam, balanam anusasanam (Bhagavatam,

11.3.44). "The Vedic purport is presented in an indirect, veiled manner in order to instruct undisciplined, childishly foolish persons."

In his *Uttara-mimamsa* of the *Vedanta-sutra*, Vedavyasa has written *athato brahma-jijnasa*. Sri Sankaracaryya says that in relation to this aphorism *athato*— means *anantaram*— 'after this.' After what? "After one has attained *Sama, dama, titiksa*; all these qualifications. One who has qualities such as having controlled his senses and his mental speculations (*Sama, dama*), having a very tolerant and persevering spirit (*titiksa*), and so on, he will come to study this book. After he

has acquired a certain grade in such qualities, he will come to study this. It is not for the ordinary people who will misunderstand, misinterpret and mutilate it thus creating trouble in society." So for the benefit of society Sankaracharyya says that only such persons will come, and they will gain a clear and proper understanding. They will then preach that to the public in particular instalments and all will be benefited thereby.

Ramanuja says, "No, *athato* does mean that. *Athato* means, 'after finishing the *purvva-mimamsa* of Jaimini.' There is *purvva-mimamsa* (primary teaching) and *uttara-mimamsa* (higher teaching). So, after one has finished the course of *purvva-mimamsa*, that is, *niskama varnasrama-dharmma*, he will then come to understand the study of this *uttara-mimamsa*. When he has finished successfully the *karmmadhikara* he will come to enter into *jnanadhikara* and that will be beneficial to him." This is Ramanuja's opinion.

And Baladeva Vidyabhusana says, "Whoever he may be, whether a *karmmi* or *jnani*, *atha* means he must have *sat-sanga*, *sadhu-sanga*.

From any position, if he can get the association of a proper *sadhu*, he is qualified to study this book and he will understand the real meaning."

So everywhere there is consideration of *adhikar*— that is, *yogyata*, or 'fitness.' He must acquire the standard of qualification, then he will come to tackle the particular plane, and he must have healthy association.

Devotee: Our Guru Maharaj, Srila Swami Maharaj Prabhupada, used to say, *athatho* means, "now that we have come to the human form of life," "after coming to the human form of life."

Srila Guru Maharaj: But the human form of life alone is not sufficient. *Sat-sanga*, *sadhu-sanga*, is necessary, *sad-guru caranasraya*. Anyone who has received the grace of a *sadhu* can have that nectar, whereas, *ya'o pada bhagavata vaisnavera sthane*, even a *brahmana* may not be qualified to enter into the *Bhagavatam*. Sriman Mahaprabhu said, "Go to a Vaisnava, from him you will get the real stand-point of *Bhagavatam* and how to approach it."

Devananda Pandit, a real *brahmana* of noted scholarship, was a 'professor' of *Bhagavatam*. Many people used to come to hear from him. But although a scholar, his stand-point was that of the Sankara school. Srivasa Pandit also lived locally but he was an expert in the real explanations of *Bhagavatam*.

Mahaprabhu suddenly one day said, "Oh, that Devananda Pandit, he teaches *Bhagavatam* to so many students, but he himself does not know its real purport. He is spreading poison in the name of *Bhagavatam*. I shall go and tear up his books!" Inspired one day with such a spirit Mahaprabhu suddenly ran towards that place, but Srivasa Pandit, and others perhaps, stopped Him, saying, "No, no, this won't look good for you."

Anyhow, on another day Mahaprabhu met Devananda Pandit and told him, "You are teaching *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to the students, but do you know what is there in *Bhagavatam*? You yourself do not know what nectar is there."

In a very ridiculing way, Mahaprabhu told him:

paripurna kariya ye saba jane khaya tabe bahirdese giya se santosa paya

(Sri Caitanya bhagavat, Madhya 21.73)

"When one who has eaten and has a full belly goes to the latrine, while passing stool he feels some relief, but you do not even get *that* sort of meagre pleasure! But in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* there is such high nectar, such high taste, but you, such a mean fellow with your mean mind, approach the *Bhagavatam* and teach it in such a filthy way.

What do you know about *Bhagavatam*?"

On another occasion, Srivasa Pandit came to hear *Bhagavatam* from Devananda's *tol*, Sanskrit school. While Devananda was pronouncing the *slokas*, Srivasa was understanding them in his own way thus causing many feelings to come in him: sometimes he shed tears and sometimes he shivered. Devananda Pandit told his students, "Oh, that man has come to disturb us with all these lower sentiments. Take him out!" So, his students took Srivasa Pandit from there and left him outside; but that enraged Mahaprabhu.

Later on Mahaprabhu's intimate devotee, Vakresvara Pandit, came to Devananda's house. He came and had a private talk with Devananda, and Devananda was converted: "Yes, I did not know that such meanings may be found in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I was influenced by Sankaracharya's teaching that Brahman is all-in-all, therefore I considered these topics of *Bhagavatam* to be all *saguna*, all under Maya." So, when Mahaprabhu after five years of *sannyasa* came again to visit this area, Kuliya here in Nabadwip Dham,

Devananda fell at His feet, crying, "I have made such great offences!"

Mahaprabhu said, "Yes, but you have committed offences not so much against Me as against Srivasa Pandit. Go and beg forgiveness from him and you will be absolved from your offences."

kuliya-gramete asi' sri-krsna-caitanya hena nahi, ya 're prabhu na karila dhanya
(*Caitanya bhagavat, Antya 3.541*)

In this way Capala Gopal and many others who had made so many bad remarks about Sri Chaitanyadev's conduct all came there to Him saying: "We could not understand Your outstanding personality and superiority, therefore we have unknowingly done much wrong against You. Please forgive us."

Mahaprabhu forgave them saying, "Oh, no, no, there is nooffence, everything is alright. Go away peacefully now."

So also, in the case of reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* there is this question of *adhikara* and *sat-sanga*. Even a *brahmana* may not have the proper position to understand, what to speak of teach, the Scriptures. Only *sadhu-sanga*— the association of a good teacher—is necessary to understand the *Sastra*.

Ragunatha Bhatta was the son of Tapana Misra and he lived in Benares. Tapana Misra was a devotee and scholar. When Ragunatha Bhatta went to visit Mahaprabhu in Puri, Mahaprabhu told him, "Don't marry but serve your parents, they are Vaisnavas. When they pass away, go to Vrndavana and live with Rupa and Sanatana. In the meantime, read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* under the guidance of a Vaisnava teacher. From him you will get the real stand-point from which to approach the subject in order to see what is its theme, what is its end and so forth. Such a teacher will be able to give you real direction in your study of all these matters;

ya'o pada bhagavata vaisnavera sthane.

Similarly Baladeva Vidyabhusana comes to say that a person may be from any position, but if he approaches a proper guide, a Guru, he can receive the capacity to enter into the meaning of the Scripture.

Devotee: What is the meaning of *bhakti-rasa-patra* in the following verse?

eka bhagavata bada - bhagavata-sastra ara

bhagavata - bhakta bhakti-rasa-patra

(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi 1.99)

Srila Guru Maharaj: This verse explains that there are two types of *Bhagavatas*: the book *Bhagavata* and the person *Bhagavata*. *Bhakti-rasa-patra* means the *sadhu*, one who is living the life of a *Bhagavata*. *Bhagavata-rasa-patra*— means 'one containing divine *rasam* pertaining to Bhagavan.' Living Scripture is *Bhagavata* and the Vaisnava is *Bhagavata*. The *Srimad Bhagavata* is the Scripture, and the person *Bhagavata* is also the Scripture.

Devotee: What is the specific meaning of *bhakti-rasa-patra*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: *Bhakti-rasa-patra* means a person who is 'filled up,' or a pot which is filled up with *rasa*—*raso vai sah*. He is full of *anandam*. *Patra* means 'person' as well as 'pot'. There are two meanings of the word *patra*: it means both a 'pot, glass, container,' and 'the person who is also a 'container'.'

So, in the title of my book, *amrtam* means— *prapanna-jivanamrtam*, or *prapannanam jivane amrta-svarupam*: for those who are surrendered, it is the nectar in their lives. It is the nectar in the soul's surrender. It will sustain the surrendered souls like *amrtam*, nectar, and they will live by taking that; it is their food and will give them sustenance.

Devotee: We would like to hear from you, Srila Guru Maharaj, how Nityananda Prabhu asked you to come here to Nabadwip and start giving initiations.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Sometime after the departure of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada I was asked by some leading members to take the position of Acaryya; but from the beginning I had within me no impression or inspiration to do so. However when I came to stay alone there was always some sort of hesitation in me that my Guru Maharaj did not like *nirjjana-bhajana*, the separate practising life. He liked that devotees would associate together and engage in *kirttana*. But if I live in an association it would mean there must be preaching and many newcomers will join, but who will give them initiation? They asked me to take the charge of initiating but I did not feel any inner inspiration to do so. I did not feel any urge for that, but I was anyway passing my time in the cultivation of Krsna consciousness.

Before I went to Vrndavana I had in mind that I would not stay there. I felt that Vrndavana is for the higher devotees but I am of lower order.

The fallen should take shelter under Mahaprabhu at *aparadha-bhanjan-pat* (the place where all offences are forgiven) in Nabadwip, so it was a foregone conclusion to me that I would take my shelter in Nabadwip, and not Vrndavana.

By the grace of Nityananda Prabhu we can receive the grace of Mahaprabhu. There is no other alternative for us, the fallen souls, especially the beginners. *Heno nitai bine bhai, radhd-krsna paite nai*— by the grace of Nityananda we shall receive the grace of Gauranga and by the grace of Gauranga we shall receive the grace of Radha-Govinda. That is the general way—the grand trunk road that was even foretold by Lord Brahma: *krsna bhakta haya yadi balavana, bidhira kalama kathi kore khan khan*— "If a devotee of Sri Krsna is very powerful, he can easily cut into pieces that which is written down as his destiny."

Then when I came from Vrndavana to take my permanent residence here at this *aparadha-bhanjan-path*, Koladwip, I thought, "I am going to take my shelter in Nabadwip Dham permanently. But *Dhamesvara*, the Master of the Dham, is Nityananda Prabhu, therefore before going to Mahaprabhu's birthplace I must visit Nityananda Prabhu's birthplace at Ekachakra and beg His permission. If He is propitiated then I may live in Nabadwip Dham safely, otherwise it will be impossible." So before I came here I went straight to Nityananda Prabhu's birthplace and made my prostrate obeisances with the prayer,

"You are *patita-pavann*, saviour of the fallen, and I crave Your mercy.

Please grant me permission to stay permanently at Koladwip in Nabadwip Dham, that I may have my shelter there." At that time I had already chosen this place at Gupta Govardhana.

Whenever I fell flat with that prayer, at once some urge came in my mind, "You are praying for the grace of Nityananda Prabhu as *patita-pavana* but you are apathetic to *patita*, the fallen, so how can you hope to have His sympathy?" This suddenly came in my mind.

"Nityananda Prabhu is *patita-pavana* but I do not like to extend my helping hand to others, so how can I expect His grace and mercy?"

That sort of strong reflection came in me and anyhow I put forward my position

to Him and came here. Also our Srila Prabhupada's nature was always pressing on my mind: he was always against *nirjjana-bhajana* but I was going to do that very thing.

Anyhow, I came here and for two rupees per month I rented a room nearby and stayed there. During the day-time I read the *Sastra* and from evening I used to take the Holy Name, and after finishing the chanting of one lakh (100,000) Names I would go to bed.

I took Giridhari with me from Vrndavana and kept Him on a small throne in the room. I would cook something just once in a day, offer to Giridhari and then take some *Prasadam*. In the evening I would also take a little *Prasadam*, and in this way I passed my days. Unknown to anyone I came to this place but gradually my Godbrothers searched for me, and finding me, they began to come now and then. Some began to stay and did not want to leave.

At that time when going through the books of Jiva Goswami I found he had written that those who have money but do not spend it for the Lord, they commit *vitta-sathya*. Similarly those who have some knowledge and experience about *bhakti*, about Krsna and the devotees, but do not like to help others, they commit *jnana-sathya*. At the same time I had in my memory from my early days a story from the *Puranas* where it is mentioned that a particular *brahmana* was a big scholar but he gave no education or help to anyone. As a result, in his next life he received the body of a mango tree which bore many beautiful fruits, but not even a single bird would touch them. Then one day Anantadeva noticed the tree while on his way to see God. When he enquired about it, the Lord replied, "He was a great *pandit* but he did not instruct or give his share of learning to anybody. He was so miserly in his scholarship that in his next birth he was put in such a position as this tree."

Another thing also came to my mind, that a doctor is not omniscient, but should he not try his best to cure a patient? As much as he has capacity he must try to help, otherwise the world will be at a stand-still. It is not that everyone will say, "Only if I have complete and full knowledge will I approach to help another," for that is not possible in this world. Everyone has some relative position. With this also coming to my mind I began in a mild way to help. I decided not to engage on a broader scale to would try to educate him in this spiritual line in the minimum way, or to initiate. With this spirit I took my position here remembering the inspiration from *patita-pavana* Nityananda Prabhu that came to

me: "You must try your best to help those that in your consideration are fallen."

I was not fully reluctant, but I was not making any big attempt because it is mentioned also in the *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* that it is prohibited to make so many temples and so many programmes on a big scale:

bahu-grantha kalabhyasa vyakhyavada-vivarjanam vyava

hareha pyakarpanyam sokadyavasavartita

(*Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhuh Madhya*, 2.79.76)

When our Guru Maharaj was delivering lectures from *Bhakti-*

rasamrta-sindhu on the 64 kinds of devotion, I noted, "Establishing temples and programmes on a large scale is prohibited there, but our Srila Guru Maharaj is doing that very thing. On a big scale he is making propaganda and money, and he is spending also in great quantities to construct the temples and other things. In *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* Rupa Goswami has prohibited this but yet our Guru Maharaj has undertaken all these things. What will he say when this point comes up for discussion?"

Then I found that in one or two words he explained the whole thing.

He said, "It is a question of personal capacity. One man may manage an empire and may still find time for leisure whereas another man is barely able to manage his family and cannot find any leisure-time." So it depends on the capacity of the individual whether something will be considered great or small. It is a question of personal capacity, and according to our capacity we must try our best.

Chapter 4 Affectionate Krsna

Some poets can describe very beautifully anything they touch; that is called *kavi*. Someone may be a renowned *kavi*, but that does not mean he is an Acharyya. His life may be a filthy one, and what we receive from him is not acceptable. Professor Nisikanta Sanyal, the author of *Sri Krsna Chaitanya*, was a very strong and almost 'blind' follower of our Srila Guru Maharaj. After coming to this line of Gaudiya Math he noted in his diary, "One who does not sincerely believe in a particular creed, but goes to write about and eulogize that line of thought, is a hypocrite. We must be very careful about this: to see if a man does not actually

believe what he himself says. If the man and his word are different we must not believe him, rather we should be very careful in his association. He does not believe in what he is saying. He himself does not believe it, so he is just a hypocrite who is double-dealing!"

This was found in Nisikanta Sanyal's diary.

Once a doctor came to give me treatment when I was ill. He said, "You have come this far in your life and have passed so many days wearing your red cloth, what have you achieved?" He wanted to know: "You are passing so many days as a red-clad man, but have you got anything?"

I said, "Yes; and I think I have enough as to say with boldness that what is written by so many big poets who don't have the conviction given in their own writings is all false! They may hold the highest position in the 'culture' of the present day, but what they are giving is all wrong and filthy. This much I have understood!"

One of my friends from my previous life also came to see me and put to me a straight question. He asked, "What have you got, have you seen God?" I answered, "No, I have not yet seen Him as you may think He is to be 'seen'."

Then he asked, "What have you got, that for so long you have lived such a life?" Then I told him, "The great famous *kavis* of our land, they had nothing, and what they said is all false, this much I have understood!" He was very much depressed and went away. This kind of 'sight,' when they said that "this is God," and "I have seen God," is all false and empty. It is all *saguna*: it is within Maya.

There is another important example that comes to mind. I had been in the Mission perhaps only a year or so. At that time the Calcutta Math was in a hired house at Ultadingi, and on the Day of Appearance of Bhaktivinoda Thakur there was a festival. A pandal had been erected in the street, and meetings were going on there. One respectable zamindar was invited by our Godbrother, Goswami Maharaj, and he asked Prabhupada, "I want to have a very private talk with you."

It was on a dark night, and a meeting was arranged. Two chairs were placed together. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada came there and that gentleman sat close to him. I was thinking that Prabhupada should not be left alone, and so managed to take a position a little distance away in the darkness. I was also very curious:

"What does he have to say?" Then that man, very close to our Guru Maharaj's ear, whispered, "Have you seen God?"

Srila Prabhupada's answer was, "What is the good of saying that, 'I have seen,' or, 'I have not seen'? As long as *you* don't know how to see or know what is necessary to see God, you cannot get any benefit by my mere statement that, 'I have seen,' or, *I* have not seen.' You are blind to both things. The first thing is that you should learn *how* to see God. You must get that sort of 'eye' to see God. Without that, any man may say, 'I have seen'—but what is that to you? You may be deceived! If I say, 'No, I have not seen your 'God'—what you have concocted within you as God—that will also just misguide you."

As Prabhupada tried to say this the zamindar repeatedly asked, "Have you seen, have you seen?" But Prabhupada firmly stuck to his own point: "That will be of no good to you. You should know what is God, how to see Him, and what is His nature; all of this you must study yourself, otherwise you will be deceived by anyone and everyone. A mere statement has no value." Such was the meeting I witnessed there.

On another occasion our Madhav Maharaj, who was first named Hayagriva Brahmachari, went with his cousin-brother, Narayana Mukharji, to visit Katwa in order to see Mahaprabhu's *Sri-Murti*.

From there they came to see Mayapur and then to Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada saw the two young men of fair complexion approaching him, and asked, "Where have you been?" Hayagriva answered, "We went to Katwa to have *darsana* of Mahaprabhu's *Sri Vighraha* there."

I heard from Madhav Maharaj himself that Prabhupada pressed him:

"Did you see? Could you *see* Mahaprabhu?" They said, "Yes, ordinarily we have seen." But the way he put his question and pressed, "Have you had *darsana*?" raised some question within their minds, "Oh, he means something else. *Real* sight" They then reflected,

"Yes, we have seen what ordinary men see. But that is not proper seeing. If we want to see Him, then we have to get such an eye by going to Guru."

om ajnana timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya caksur

unmilitam yena tasmai sri gurave namah

"I was blind in the darkness of ignorance but my Spiritual Master applied the ointment of proper spiritual knowledge and thus opened my eyes. Unto him I offer my respectful obeisances." All these things came in Prabhupada's teaching.

Hayagriva Prabhu, who was previously Herambo Banarjee, related that he had been working in a private European company when suddenly by reading a book of Sankaracharyya he felt some intense indifference to worldly life. He then ran away to Hardvara and went far up into the hills where he stayed for three days and three nights under a tree, only eating some bael fruit. Then, as he told me, "I heard a sound: 'Leave here now, you will find a real Guru, a *sad-Guru*. You will find him, so now you leave.'" He came back down, and consequently to the Gaudiya Mission. That was Herambo Banerjee, who was later called Ganesa, then Hayagriva Brahmachari, and finally Madhav Maharaj.

So the question is, "How to see?" The proper eye is necessary and that is called *divya-darsana*. In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita*, Krsna says to Arjjuna:

*na tu mam sakyase drastum, anenaiva sva-caksusa divyam dadami te caksuh,
pasya me yogam aisvaram*

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.8)

"By these present eyes of yours you will not be able to see Me.

Therefore I give you supernatural eyes by which you can see My almighty, mystic power." But here we find another extraordinary consideration: Arjjuna already had the capacity of higher vision (to see the Lord in His two-handed human-like original form), so here the *divya-darsana* that was given to Arjjuna in order to see that Universal Form of the Lord meant he was to come down to a lower level. He had to actually come down to have that kind of *darsana* of the Lord, which was not the highest. Then, when Arjjuna could not tolerate that *divya-darsana*, he said, "I cannot bear it. You please come to my level, as I had experience of You before." Then the Lord became first *catur-bhuja* (four-armed form of Narayana) and then *dvi-bhuja* (two-armed human-like form of Krsna), and Arjjuna said,

drstvedam manusam rupam, tava saumyam janarddana

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.51)

"O Sri Krsna, seeing this charming two-armed, human-featured form of Yours, now my heart has become fulfilled and pacified. Now I have come to my normal position."

Then the Lord said:

*sudurdarsam idam rupam, drstavān asi yaṁ mama deva apy asya rupasya,
nityam darsana-kanksināḥ*

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.52)

"Oh Arjuna, the chance to see Me as you are now seeing Me before you is very, very rarely attained. Even the gods constantly aspire for a glimpse of this human-like form of truth, consciousness and beauty."

Generally it may be thought that the *divya-darsana*, the vision of the Universal Form, is what is very rarely to be found. But by the specific use of the words *drstavān asi*, in the present tense, and not *drstavān* which is past tense, our interpreters say that here what is being referred to is the human-like form. The Lord is saying, *deva apy asya rupasya, nityam darsana-kanksināḥ*, "At present, how you are seeing Me, that is in My two-handed figure. But the public can't understand, they generally look to My *catur-bhuja-rupa*, four handed form. Or they look to My *divya-rupa*, which contains the whole cosmic manifestation within, as the highest; but that is a troublesome form of Myself. It is not natural, but it is like My playing the part of a magician: 'Everything is in Me! See this, and this and now this!' That is not *aprakṛta* but it is full of majesty of different types mixed together."

But the *aprakṛta-rupa* is *dvi-bhuja*, the two-handed form. Krsna told Arjuna:

*sudurdarsam idam rupam, drstavān asi yaṁ mama deva apy asya rupasya,
nityam darsana-kanksināḥ*

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.52)

"This *saccidananda* two-armed human-like form of mine which you are seeing is very, very rarely seen. Even the demigods constantly aspire for a glimpse of this form."

Of all the Lord's Pastimes, the highest is very near to that of human type—*aprakṛta*. It is like human life. Rather, human life has been fashioned after His highest form of Playful Life. The model is there in the original, highest form of life, and human society has been fashioned after that.

In the Bible also it is said, "God made man after His own image." And the *Vṛndavana-līla* appears most human-like and ordinary, even to the extent where the Lord acts like a rogue and a debauchee by stealing, lying and doing anything and everything— all in the sweetest way.

Without it being so arranged, those who serve the Lord in particular *rasas* cannot maintain their positions. Perhaps if He did not steal and make such boisterousness. Mother Yasoda would die! So such roguery and impertinence is there. Though externally Yasoda is angry, still her very constitution is such that if that impertinence were absent she could not live! An important part of *vatsalya-rasa* is the essential pleasure in tolerating the impertinence of the child.

Kṛṣṇa is always *aprakṛta*. *Prakṛta* means 'mundane' and *aprakṛta* means similar in appearance to the mundane plane but in fact just the opposite. He appears to be similar to the patient but it is not so.

*kṛṣṇera yateka khela sarvottama nara-līla nara-vapu tāhara svarupa gopa-vesa
venukara nava-kisora natavara nara-līla haya anurupa kṛṣṇera madhura-rupa
suna sanatana*

ye rūpera eka kṇa dubaya saba tribhuvana sarvva-praṇi kare akarsana

(Sri Chaitanya-charitamṛta, Madhya 21.101,102)

" The most supreme form of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa, who plays in His eternal Divine Pastimes just like a human being. An ever-youthful cowherd boy of Vṛndavana, He enacts His Pastimes, always playing His flute. His beauty is so charming and sweet that the whole universe is flooded by an atom of it, and all beings are drawn irresistibly to Him."

It has been mentioned in the Scripture that amongst all the Lord's Pastimes the human-like Pastimes are the best. His human-like behaviour has been considered to be the highest and most tasteful conception. The highest type is not the godly, grave and majestic, rather the simplicity of His apparently ordinary human-like behaviour has been considered to be the best of all and the most original.

Grandeur, majesty, and awe and reverence are not liked by the devotees of higher type. These qualities imply a very distant relationship whereas the human-like relationship is very intensely intimate and close, as if equal with us; and that has been said to be the highest mercy. When He shows such merciful Pastimes, that really is His highest position. There He appears as though of the same rank as His servitors and He is so merciful, so loving, and so affectionate. Sometimes Mother Yasoda whips Him and He weeps, and sometimes He carries His father's shoes upon His head, and sometimes His friends climb on His shoulders. Through this affection He in many ways shows Himself to be very homely; so very homely. His magnanimity, love and affection is of such a high degree that He becomes so homely.

The '*aprakṛta* realm' must be the origin of everything. It cannot but be so. Here in India we have our Vedic culture and tradition, but the present-day *pandits*—the European scholars—say, "No, the first origin of civilization was from Asia Minor, or Babylon, or some other quarter." The empirical scholars are of a particular opinion, but we do not accede to that. If we can accept that the *aprakṛta* realm is the origin of everything, then whatever is there, although appearing simple and plain, contains within it all the grandeur of Vaikuntha. In Sri *Caitanya-caritamṛtam* there is a description of the discussion between Svarupa Damodara Goswami and Srivasa Pandit on *Hera-pancami* day. Srivasa Thakur was an incarnation of Narada Muni. In order that the truth be known to the public so others may understand, he pleaded on behalf of the opposition party. He spoke in favour of the supremacy Vaikuntha, with all its grandeur and splendour. In response Svarupa Damodara said, "It is not actually so, but, Srivasa, you, being in the mood and temperament of Narada Muni, can appreciate more about the majesty and grandeur of Vaikuntha. Don't you know, can't you remember that although the *ratnam*, the jewels etc., are all in Vṛndavana in a suppressed way, the residents there do not like such things."

Those who are poor adore gold and jewels whereas those who have enough of such riches prefer flowers, trees, and all such natural, simple things. Similarly, the grandeur of Vaikuntha is suppressed in the *aprakṛta* world where there are *kalpa-vṛksas*—desire-fulfilling trees—and where everything is made of *cintamani*, touchstone.

Anything can produce anything there in that original place! So, once we admit that to be the original position, by deduction we will see that everything, however gorgeous and dignified must all come from there.

And that is the acme. By analysis and logic we must regulate our thoughts in that direction.

Chapter 5 Priority Service

Generally every movement coming from Kṛṣṇa's plane originates from the central will to satisfy Him. The whole *Svarupa-sakti* cannot be taken under any law; it is sweet will. *Yogamaya*, or *Svarupa-sakti*, gives the inspiration for one to be captured by the higher inner potency of Goloka and Vaikuntha, and in that way to become utilized for the purpose of the Centre. In this mundane plane inspiration draws us towards different stages of enjoying spirit. That vibration comes from innumerable local centres of local interest. Also in the attraction to the Centre there are many stages, but that vibration is from the Narayana Centre, the Rama Centre, the Kṛṣṇa Centre—all in consonance with the main Centre. In Vaikuntha there are different types of *rasa* and inspiration than in Goloka, and the residents act accordingly. There are also different specific centres of interest, *dasya*, *sakhyā*, *vatsalya*, and *madhura*, but all are for the satisfaction of the Absolute.

In this mundane plane we also find different centres but almost all are meant for local interest. All the different vibrations come to clash for different interests which are, on the whole, all of separate enjoyment.

This is found in the material plane all the way up to Satyaloka, heaven. Above that are Viraja and Brahmaloka from where no traceable vibration originates. Then again from Sivaloka onwards some vibration originates, but that is of service. That vibration is of different stages, but all are of Centre-carrying interest.

Here in this mundane universe those who come from the higher region always try to connect with the Centre. Some are able to escape from local interest and realize such a position. Although they may not be cent-per-cent converted, they may sometimes be used as agents of that world according to the wish of that higher plane. As much as they are inclined towards that central interest, they are utilized by the higher office.

Devotee: So one might be inspired from the higher plane to describe Kṛṣṇa consciousness according to time and place?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It may be so. If he is so qualified, reliable and pure that he can catch and transmit the will from above, he may be selected as an agent to reveal the truth of that land.

Devotee: But it is a rare thing?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Rare, of course. When Mahaprabhu was in Puri, He utilized one of His devotees, Nrsimhananda, as the mediator.

It is mentioned in *Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta* that Nrsimhananda while here in Nabadwip would lose his senses and, being inspired by Mahaprabhu, would talk here about Him. Nrsimhananda would receive inspiration as though hypnotized from afar. A hypnotist can normally only hypnotize within the range of his senses, but it may sometimes be possible also that from afar one can inspire, hypnotize and engage another as a medium. It is mentioned that Mahaprabhu did just that to Nrsimhananda Brahmachari who was able to tell what Mahaprabhu was doing. He also foretold Mahaprabhu's imminent arrival in Nabadwip as well as many other things. It was all true and verified in due course of time. Such things are possible.

In this modern age it is possible to communicate over long distances physically by means of radios, telephones, etc., but in earlier days this was done mentally. Mental and psychic powers previously were more developed by the *yogis* and devotees. Now physically such transmission is being achieved by scientific knowledge and it is generally easy for people at large to believe. But in previous days such communication was psychic, so ordinary people could not know how it was being done. We also tend to think it is impossible even though now it is physically possible by telephone to talk with others in America and London. Such modern communication is also a miracle.

Previously the development was such that the *yogis* who may not even be devotees or connected in their practice with God, were able to develop such psychic powers that they were able to communicate on the mental plane.

It has also been recognized in the writings of the Western philosophers that it is quite possible and believable that Indian *yogis* can cure diseases from a distant place. In those writings the opinion has been given that by creating a magnetic force a disease may be cured, and also it has been considered that previously some Indian *yogis* may have had the mental power to do so. And all the big

Indian *yogis* themselves say, and stand as proof, that so many wonderful things can be achieved only by improving psychic powers. They used to communicate with even the demigods. They were also able to go to the demigods, but only mentally, and similarly the demigods would come here. That transaction was not imaginary but was reliable and scientific.

Devotee: There is a great interest in the West in this subtle science of parapsychology.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. Several years ago some Russians came here to enquire amongst the Indian *yogis*: "How can we understand or read things that are far away such as on the moon, sun, mars, jupiter etc.?" They had heard that the ancient *yogis of India* could do such things.

The speed of the mind is considered to be most rapid, faster even than electricity or light. This appealed to the Russians who wanted to know whether any *yogis* were available who could help fulfil their material purpose: "We have sent a rocket towards Jupiter and wish to know whether by mental energy it is possible to receive information from there very quickly."

In India there is recognition that only the mind, and no other material thing, can be quicker than the velocity of light or the electron.

Manogati, mind can hear. Despite the great distance, a far off place can be remembered within a second. The mind is the quickest conveyance, the quickest medium. So those Russian gentlemen came here with the enquiry: "We have come with some material object, to see if we can utilize the speed of mind in the case of scientific research." But finally they said, "No, we could not do it. We failed. It appears that we are unable now to meet a man with such capacity here in India."

Once I was delivering a lecture to an assembly of advocates. They put a question to me, "How is it that a few years ago we had higher connection with the demigods and Satyaloka but now we seem to have become disconnected? No god comes here although only a few years ago such things took place. Devarsi Narada and so many gods no longer come here, and we cannot go to them. Even in the time of the *Mahabharata*, gods used to freely come here, and Arjjuna and others used to go there to heaven. How has this come about?"

In reply I explained: "The psychic powers were very much improved at that

time. The power to communicate subtly was very developed scientifically, but now we have lost that capacity."

I gave an example. Consider the present situation: the scientific civilization has created so many wonders such as aeroplanes, buses and rockets, but the whole world is afraid of atomic war, and if that should happen then everything may be ruined. The whole present civilization would be destroyed, but some books may be scattered here and there. In those books there is much mentioned about the present-day scientific advancement, so the later generations will read that there used to be aeroplanes, buses and so many things. But after the nuclear war those future generations of crippled persons will not be able to understand that such things really existed. They will consider, "What is written in these books is all false, all imagination." They will say that the scientific improvements were all imagination. Without any aeroplanes, rockets, etc. having remained, they will think, "All is bogus!"

Our present situation is similar: the extensive development of the mental powers that was cultured in earlier days is now no more. We have deviated from that previous position, so even if Devarsi Narada would come, we would not be able to see him. If Devarsi Narada comes here he will not come with a physical body but with his astral body. Our minds are not sufficiently developed to be able to detect that, but if they were, we would be able to see:

"Oh! Devarsi Narada has come." The impression in the mind's eye would be able to detect when such as Devarsi, Vyasadeva, Mahaprabhu or Nityananda Prabhu would come here. But that capacity has been blocked in the present age, rather this is the age where with a microscope we can scrutinize an insect or see a virus. This is the age now!

Devotee: Many years ago when Srila Swami Maharaj was in the West, a lecture programme was arranged but hardly anyone attended.

The devotees apologized but Srila Swami Maharaj said, "Well, Narada Muni, Lord Brahma and many others came—I could detect that, but you were unable to see."

Srila Guru Maharaj: Just as when Sukadeva delivered *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, his Gurus—Narada, Vyasadeva, Atri, Vasistha and others—all came there, similarly Srila Swami Maharaj went to the West with so much earnestness to

preach the doctrine of Love Divine, so his Gurus went there to see how He was getting on. It is not impossible.

naham vasami vaikunthe, yoginam hrdayesu va mad bhaktah yatra gayanti, tatra tisthami narada

The Lord Himself says, "O, Narada, wherever My devotees sing my praises I cannot but be present there."

"*Naham vasami vaikunthe*— I do not live in the transcendental plane; *yoginam hrdayesu va*— nor in the heart of a *yogi*; *mad bhaktah yatra gayanti*— but wherever My devotees sing with most earnest heart; *tatra tisthami*— I present Myself there. I take My seat and hear their hearty song. Their singing and chanting carries Me from the heart of the *yogi* and even from the throne of My Vaikuntha. I run towards the place where the devotees chant with hearty devotion about Me: that is what really attracts Me most." Narayana Himself says this, therefore it is so that Narayana and His higher devotees come to attend such assemblies.

Devotee: Can mental powers still be developed or is it no longer possible due to the influence of *kali-yuga*, the age of quarrel?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It may be possible but devotees do not like to waste their time in such affairs—they have no time to lose. They do not care to cultivate any form of mystic *yoga*, rather their concentration is on service.

There is a story about a devotee who was very busily engaged and absorbed in the service of his Gurudeva. By his service he satisfied the Lord who came in disguise and said, "Dear devotee, I am satisfied with your services. Come, I shall take you to Vaikuntha."

The devotee replied, "No, no. I have no time. My Guru Maharaj has entrusted me with this service, so I must attend to it. I have no time to go to Vaikuntha with You." He had such attention towards his service that he could not find time even to attend to the call to go to Vaikuntha.

We are to concentrate on our duty given by Gurudeva, and shall have no time to spare to go to Vaikuntha to fulfil our curiosity. Such sort of exclusive attention is laudable and necessary for the devotee. If the master says to his servant, "You have laboured a long time, now you are tired. Come and take your food." The

dutiful servant may reply, "No, no, my Master, I have no time. I must finish this and then I shall go to take food." Such dealings are not impossible. Similarly a faithful worker on being called by his master to stop work and take rest may reply, "No, no I have no time to take rest now." I shall finish this, then I shall take rest." This is responsibility in service.

Another example is found in the service of Mother Yasoda. She was boiling milk for young Krsna, Gopal. He was engaged in sucking Mother Yasoda's breast while nearby some milk was being heated in a pot. Suddenly the milk came to the boil and overflowed into the fire.

Immediately Yasoda forcibly took Gopal from her lap and went to take care of the milk.

Naturally, Krsna became dissatisfied to be snatched away from His Mother's breast. So it may apparently seem that Mother Yasoda committing an error: that she interrupted Krsna's immediate satisfaction of sucking her breast by forcibly putting him to one side to go to save the overflowing milk, which may or may not be going to be directly utilized for Him. But this is an extreme example to show how much care and attention must be paid to save and protect the materials to be used in the service of Krsna—even if that should make Him dissatisfied for the time being.

Everything is meant for Krsna, so we must preserve and take care of everything. "For the time being Krsna may be a little dissatisfied, but what does it matter? I need to look after His service materials." That should be our tendency and it is a very fine, very subtle thing to detect and understand. What is the underlying tendency? We must have the mood that everything belongs to Krsna, and at the cost of the present, the future must be kept up: "At present we may suffer, but we must still store for our future." When this sort of tendency is in the interest of Krsna, it is to be appreciated. So we are to engage in *jnana-sunya-bhakti*—service with no mood of curiosity. It is not that we shall want to be a big word-juggler, *yogi*, *jnani*. or any type of 'big' person. But we shall feel satisfied if we have the chance to lead even a half-educated forest life, but as humble servants of the Gopis. Such humility, and not grandeur, satisfies Krsna most. Grandeur may be adored in Vaikuntha, but it is ignored in Vrndavana Dham. The Vrndavana Pastimes are simple, plain and ordinary: neither high nor low—but a golden average. The degree of meanness can be infinite.

The degree of nobleness and grandness can also be infinite. But the middle point, we may say, is the golden mean. Love is there. Love does not want to see into the future, but only the present—the concentrated present. Love. For love we may risk the whole future and may not care at all about the past. "Act. Act in the living present."

Grandness and reverence are not very suitable for love. We are to think that a plain life is the highest position for the transaction of love whereas grandeur disturbs us in our transaction of true love.

Chapter 6 Humility in Service

Devotee: Does Lord Balarama expand Himself into the form of the Dham? Is Vaikuntha-Dham an expansion of Lord Balarama?

Srila Guru Maharaj: It is Lord Balarama's representation in the form of Sankarsana. Lord Balarama Himself is in Goloka, and his *Vaibhava*, extended or delegated Self, is in Vaikuntha.

Devotee: And He Himself expands into Goloka Dham?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, Goloka Vrndavana is all His expansion, but there He is always active through His expansion as the 'underground' *sandhini*, unifying, potency; whereas His *madhura-rasa* is passive. In Goloka, Radharani's *Vaibhava* is having full play, and Balarama's potency is there passively as Yogamaya. Balarama and Yogamaya are of a similar function: both of them combined are conducting the arrangements of the stage for Krsna's Pastimes.

Devotee: Maharaj, what is the position of Subhadra?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Her position is not in Vrndavana, but in Dvaraka. The Subhadra in Jagannatha-Dham is *Arjjuna-patni*, the wife of Arjjuna, and sister of Krsna. She is within Dvaraka-lila and has nothing to do with Vrndavana. Besides this there is another Subhadra who is one among the many *sakhis* of Radharani in Vrndavana. She is called Bhadra or Subhadra.

Devotee: Is it Dvaraka-Subhadra who is also sometimes referred to as Yogamaya?

Srila Guru Maharaj: No. At the time when I was composing *Sri-Sri Prapanna-*

jivanamrtam I was faced with the position of having to think very deeply on this point: "What is the relation between Baladeva and Yogamaya?" Then, although I did not find it anywhere in the Scriptures, I discovered within myself that Baladeva must be the Master of Yogamaya. That is, after analysing the spiritual environment of Their Pastimes, I came to the conclusion that They must have some connection. They are both making arrangements for Kṛṣṇa-līlā, so Their relationship must be very intimate: Yogamaya must be in the position of the wife of Balarama. This conclusion came to me, and then later on I found that Jīva Goswāmī had also expressed such opinion that Yogamaya and Baladeva are very close and similar, and also Vṛndadevī's nature and conduct is of very similar nature to Them in this respect. Yogamaya is in the inner circle—the *śakti* position—and Balarama is in the outer or 'male' circle—the second layer. But in the centre is only Kṛṣṇa feeling His own ecstasy: *sukha-rupa kṛṣṇa kare sukha asvādāna* (*Chaitanya charitāmṛta*, *Madhya* 8.158).

When extension begins, we find that Balarama and Yogamaya make arrangements for that transaction of Kṛṣṇa where *rasamṛta-murti*, Kṛṣṇa the embodiment of all rasas, tastes Himself. *Rasa* is tasting Himself. It is different in the case of the mundane *rasa*, where the soul is the subject and the '*rasa*' is an object to be 'enjoyed' by him; but here, *rasa* is Himself the Highest Subject, and He is tasting Himself—

sukha-rupa kṛṣṇa kare sukha asvādāna.

He then gradually extends Himself and so we find Baladeva who is a facsimile of Kṛṣṇa. But because in the science of *rasa*, Baladev's direct approach to *madhura-rasa* is not admissible. He extends Himself as a special potency, Yogamaya, and goes to perform in that *madhura-rasa*.

Another representation or delegation of Baladeva is Ananga Manjari, the younger sister of Srimatī Rādhārāṇī. It is found that Baladeva as Ananga Manjari participates there in the service of Rādhārāṇī, whereas the external management is in the hands of Yogamaya.

Ananga Manjari is the manifestation of Baladeva through whom He is represented in *madhura-rasa*. The science of *rasa* does not allow Baladeva to enter there with His own *abhimāna*—mood—, therefore, we are told. He has to go there as Ananga Manjari. The laws of *rasa* are of such fine importance.

The extensive management is the department of the Yogamaya potency, but that is in a second-hand position. The first position is that of Krsna, and in a secondary position, helping Krsna-lila from outside, is Yogamaya.

Devotee: Didn't Balarama return to Vrndavana and perform the *Rasa-liIa* with the Gopis?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, but that was with a separate group of Gopis. The interpretation and inner understanding of the Goswamis is that Balaram performed the *Rasa-lila* externally, but within His heart He was making *Rasa-lila* of Krsna. His position and personality is such: He is faithfully dedicated wholesale to the cent-per-cent satisfaction of the Centre. His very constitutional position is such that He cannot do otherwise. That is His intrinsic nature: to put everything towards the satisfaction of Krsna. So the key for service to the Master, Krsna Himself, is in His hand. And that Master is an autocrat! But He says, "Don't be jealous of Me. I am your friend. You are all My own, so don't be afraid.

bhoktaram yajna-tapasam, sarvva-loka-mahesvaram suhrdam sarvva-bhutanam, jnatva mam santim rcchati

(*Srimad Bhagavad-gita* 5.29)

"Your anxiety will subside when you come to understand that everything is in My hands and that I am not your enemy, rather I am your friend. I have a friendly relationship with you all. I am all-in-all, but I am your well-wisher and friend. When you come to realize this you will be in real peace, otherwise you will always have worry without end."

Our anxiety will end only when we shall see, "My own interest is fully represented in the Cause, in He who controls the whole. He must give me favourable consideration as He is my friend, and so there can be no fear of any misdeed or injustice." Only then can we find peace within our heart.

Bhoktaram yajna-tapasam, sarvva-loka-mahesvaram— the great Master .of all that we can conceive is the recipient of everything.

Bhoktaram yajna-tapasam— everything, to the farthing, goes only to Him. *Siihrdam sarvva-bhutanam*— and He is friendly to me. He is friendly not only to me, but-the real interest of everyone is represented in His consideration. And,

jnatva mam santim rcchati— only the person who realizes, "My interest is assured in the highest quarter of management," can attain real peace of heart. He will feel, "Yes, I have no worry, no anxiety."

In the Lila, however, we find so many kinds of anxiety and worry, but that is something else. It should not be equated with the life of this plane, rather it comes under another category:

bahye visa-jvala haya, bhitare ananda-maya

krsna-premara adbhuta carita

(*Sri Caitanya-caritdmrta, Madhya 2.50*)

This means that union-in-separation is the highest form of union. It cannot be attacked or challenged by any circumstances. It appears to be very painful, but internally the position is one of greater intensity of ecstasy. The real gist of the whole meaning of the study of this higher subject is this, and we are to understand and follow it with particular attention and intelligence.

The real fact is that this is only intelligible by faith, *sraddha*. *Buddhi-grahyam atindriyam*— no precedents will come to 'prove' such things; it has no other verification. Faith alone can enter that domain. It is an infinite thing but we are tiny people, so what capacity does our faith have? Even in this universe there is so much which seems far beyond the stretch of our faith. Our faith is in such tiny measure when compared with the Infinite, so how much can we boast to have in relation to Him? Therefore why should we be so miserly in our faith?

To be miserly will be suicidal. Faith will come first, then research will follow. In this world also, it is the same: the intuition, the theory or idea of a thing comes first and research follows. So unbridled faith must be allowed to have its free movement there.

Devotee: There is a verse by Srila Prabodhananda Saraswati: *vancito 'smi vancito 'smi, vancito 'smi na samsayah visvam gaura-rase magnam, sparso 'pi mama nabhavat*

"Deceived, deceived, no doubt, deceived am I! The whole universe became flooded with love of *Sri* Gauranga, but alas, my fate was not to get even the slightest touch of it."

Srila Guru Maharaj: That is a clear thing and it expresses the very nature of the devotee. That is, as much conception of the infinite as one has, he must feel within himself that he is insignificant to the same degree. It is the infinite conception from the view of relativity. It is a question of relativity. When you can see a bigger thing then relatively you cannot but think that you are very infinitesimal. When you look at a great thing, in comparison with that you are the smallest.

Do you concede this? When you see the ocean you can perceive how tiny you are in relation to that great magnitude of water. In comparison you are very insignificant, is it not? So apply that principle in this instance also. One who looks at a great thing, whether in size, or knowledge or love, when standing at the verge of a great thing, from the consideration of relativity he shall think, "I am very poor and very low."

Purisera kita haite muni se laghistha: Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami says of himself, "I am so mean, lower even than the worm in stool." When one has seen such pure and higher things, in comparison with that he must have such feelings. Mahaprabhu Himself says, "I am as insignificant as an insect but still I continue my life. My life is like an insect's."

na prema-gandho 'sti darapi me harau

krandami saubhagya-bharam prakasitum

vamsi-vilasy-anana-lokanam vina

vibharmmi yat prana-patangakan vrtha

(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 2.45)

"Such a pure and merciful ocean of love I see spread before Me but I am so unqualified that I do not receive even a drop of it. Why? Because I am a hypocrite. I really do not want it, so I don't deserve it.

I don't want it, and so My life is unfulfilled. I have come near such a vast and beautiful thing but I am not allowed to even touch or receive a drop of it. I am so low, so unqualified. Why? Because I am a hypocrite. But still I think I am great, that I have importance, *pratistha*. Despite all of this I cannot leave my vanity, my false vanity.

I want to display that I have some great achievement of *Krsna-prema* and therefore I shed tears. But these tears are not real, for still I am addicted to My lower self, I am self-centred. My self-centredness has not been dissolved. I am a seeker of My own fame, so I am not being allowed to partake of that ocean of nectar."

So, seeing such ocean of nectar one must gradually come to see himself as the meanest of the mean. As much as one comes in connection and consciousness of the higher reality then relatively he is compelled to think himself to be the meanest of the mean. That is the truth. That is the law of nature.

Therefore devotees of the higher order are seen always to say, "Everyone has the chance but not I. I cannot avail myself of this ocean."

Narottama dasa Thakur said, "Jagai and Madhai were such great culprits but they were released and received the nectar, but it seems that only I, Narottama, am barred and cannot touch it."

It is the nature of one who appreciates the highest that he will think himself to be in the lower position. We find this in the practices and sayings of the great men. It is a question of *trnad api sunicena*, *taror api sahisnuna*, and this is a necessary qualification of a devotee. We must have that sort of qualification, that sort of heart. That must not be an artificial thing but if we are not ready to think ourselves lower,, we cannot come in connection with the higher.

trnad api sunicena, taror api sahisnuna

amanina manadena, kirttaniyah sada harih

Your attitude towards the search will be such that you are almost unfit to search for such a goal, yet you sincerely want to begin your new life. To feel you are so unqualified is the qualification for the finite to approach the Infinite. If you think that you are something, that is a disqualification in your search for the Infinite.

With humility you are to take the Name of the Lord, that Divine Sound. But the process is that you must be mindful of this necessity of humility otherwise the search will be in vain and your attempt will be lost. So what will be the proper attitude? *Trnad api sunicena*— you are to think yourself to be the meanest of the mean and the humblest of the humble. Sincerely you must feel that way. *Taror api sahisnu*— your forbearance must not have any limit. You must not feel, "So

many days, so many ages I have passed in this search but I haven't reached there yet—I shall give up." Be sure that you have come to search for the Infinite. So there is no time limit and no room for any vanity that you shall think yourself to be master of that higher realm, for that is a disqualification and must be given up from the beginning.

Amanina manadena—your highest enemy is your self-seeking nature: to think that you have some standing, some greatness in you. That sort of vanity must be abandoned. *Amanina*— you must never seek any honour for yourself: no reward. *Manadena*— at the same time you must be modest in your dealings with all others, then your *amanina* will be genuine. If you do not like to give the honour to others then your own self-seeking will be present and traceable. But when you can give honour to others without wanting any for yourself, you will be qualified to search for Govindam, for the Centre, the Infinite, the Absolute. You are a qualified student if you can give up all these bad and unfavourable prejudices. If you come to search after the Absolute then you must have such qualifications otherwise you will fail. So we find that the great devotees always condemn themselves to the extreme, beyond what we can conceive even for ordinary persons.

Kaviraj Goswami, who is the giver of the highest conception of the truth says,

jagai madhai haite muni se papistha purisera kita

haite muni se laghistha mora nama sune yei

tara punya ksaya mora nama laya yei tara papa haya

(*Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta*, *Adi* 5.205,206)

"I am worse than a worm in stool. When Jagai and Madhai came in the relativity of Mahaprabhu they were considered to be the worst sinners, but I am worse than them. My sins are so dirty no one can even dream such things. I am such a great sinner that whoever will hear about me, dirt and sin will enter him through his coming in contact with my name. Sin will enter one who once hears my name, and his good qualities will vanish." Kaviraj Goswami continues, "I am a person of the worst type, but the grace of Nityananda Prabhu possesses such a high degree of disinfection that He has given me so many things: He has taken me to Vrndavana and has given the relationship of Rupa, Raghunath and Govinda. There is no qualification in me but all is the grace of Nityananda

Prabhu."

By this he wants to express his highest gratitude to Nityananda Prabhu: "It is shameful to speak about one's own life but still I do this.

Why? If I do not do so then I shall be ungrateful to the grace and magnanimity of Nityananda Prabhu. So fallen am I but Nityananda Prabhu has given me all these things: Vrndavana, Rupa, Sanatan, Govinda, Mahaprabhu, Raghunath Dasa and so much else. It is all the gift of Nityananda Prabhu. It is His unconditional gift to this one with no qualification, and therefore I have mentioned: 'Yes I have such things.' If I do not say so then I shall be an offender to Nityananda Prabhu's grace, so I am compelled to confess that I am so sinful and fallen but by His grace I have received these things."

The conception and feelings of all the great devotees are of such type.

Srila Prabhodananda Saraswati similarly expressed, "It is there. I can see and feel that it is there but I am deprived— *sparso 'pi mama nabhavat*."

Radharani Herself says, "Krsna is qualified in every way. I can't blame Him in any way at all, but still He is so cruel to us all. He left Vrndavana and so we are all feeling extreme pain, but I cannot accuse Him in any way. This is my *durddaiva-vilasa* ('Pastime of separation')"

This is union in separation and is a peculiar type of achievement.

Externally there is suffering but internally there is transcendental ecstasy: *bahye visa-jvala haya, bhitare ananda-maya* (*Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 2.50*). When one actually has the thing, he says,

"No, I don't have it." This is the special characteristic of the Infinite.

One who has it in his possession says, "No, I have nothing." This is because it is a statement from the negative to the Positive. And when he says, "I have it," then he has not! The negative cannot assert at all but can only attract. Assertion is only with the Positive.

So the negative can hanker, he can express his own reality in the negative characteristic. He can express his degree of want. The measurement of his position is according to his negative tendency: his necessity, his depth of

attraction—not of gain. It is just the opposite to the general measurement of one's standing in this mundane world. The real measurement is in the negative side: the depth of necessity and the depth of attraction, but not of gain. Only the Positive can assert His existence.

Devotee: This is beautiful!

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. And it is because of your beautiful

attraction to all these things that they are being drawn out.

Devotee: It is one thing for such great personalities as Kaviraj Goswami to make these statements. But for men like ourselves, we actually are like that!

Srila Guru Maharaj: That will be the standard to keep in front of us, the ideal as given by our Guru Maharaj. But we must not assume ourselves to be of the standing of Kaviraj Goswami—that is another type of wrong thinking also.

In his book *Caitanya Bhagavat*, Vrndavana Dasa Thakur tries his utmost to describe the greatness and magnanimity of Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu. Then he says, "In such a modest and broad way I am appealing to the people at large, I am touching and holding their feet and putting to them: 'Please turn and appreciate the magnanimity and great gift of Gaura-Nitai, it is for your benefit. Please accept this.

No matter what class of sinner you are or what filthy position you are in, you please try to come and connect with Gaura-Nityananda. You will be blessed and all your hankering will be fulfilled. Do it, it will be for your benefit.' But, after so much fervent appeal to earnestly request you all to appreciate Gaura and Nityananda, if anyone still wants to criticize and blame Nityananda and Gaurariga then I want to kick his head!" This is also a peculiar sentiment that may come in the heart of a devotee. And how to explain it?

So many superficial critics have said "Kaviraj Goswami has appealed in such a modest way but this Vrndavana Dasa has such vanity! His vanity is so great. He is so proud that he wants to kick those who do not have faith in Gaura-Nityananda. His attitude is most impertinent."

Before joining the Mission I had read such comments, but when I came to the Gaudiya Math I heard a particular interpretation from our Srila Prabhupada. He

explained that by this statement Nityananda Prabhu has come to the relief of the most sinful and heinous. They have no other method to come to divinity, but Nityananda Prabhu has opened a way for them: they are being punished by His devotee and so Krsna's special attraction will be drawn towards them. Krsna's attraction will be there because apparently His child—His devotee—has done something wrong, so He will come to compensate for that. If punishment is given by His devotee to a member of the public, Krsna's special attention will be drawn to that man to compensate. He has tolerated and by way of compensation he will be benefited. Vrndavana Dasa has given them some punishment and dishonour; they are mortified so they must be taken in and some special grace will come to them. So by this statement Vrndavana Dasa has, even to the worst accusers, opened the door to enter into Krsnaloka. We received that sort of interpretation from our Srila Prabhupada.

From the stand-point that there cannot be any filthy thing in the devotee, then by whatever they do, some connection will be established with Krsna. Ultimately a mother has no feeling of revenge to her child. When she chastises her child then he may cry, but the mother will again come and take him on her lap. So there is no permanent apathy, jealousy or any spirit of revenge, but rather any connection that comes in any way is only of compassionate temperament to draw him forwards. Of course that does not mean that willfully we should offend the devotee and try to get benefit thereby!

That will be *aparadha*. It will be in the category of offence to think, "I will take the Name and the reaction for sinning will not affect me."

Chapter 7 Intelligently Aware

Devotee: What is the real meaning of the word *anartha*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: *Anartha* means 'separate interest.' Krsna consciousness is causeless, *nirguna*, it has no end. *Nirguna* means that the central flow and vibration of Krsna consciousness is eternal. That wave has no end. Any interest which is separate from Krsna

consciousness is *anartha*. '*Artha*' means 'necessity' and '*anartha*' is that which is not my necessity—that which is opposed to my necessity, being based on separate consciousness and interest.

So to get out of the trap of separate interest which is misleading us, and to learn how to read the Infinite, we are to identify with the universal flow, the universal wave. At present we are being carried away by different waves of separate-interest consciousness— *anartha*, it is not necessary for us. Our only necessity is to merge in the wave of the universal interest, which is for Itself, for Himself.

The Lord says:

aham hi sarvva-yajnanam, bhakta ca prabhur eva ca

(Bhagavad-gita, 9.24)

"I am the only enjoyer of all sacrifices, of all movement in this world.

I am the only enjoyer, and everything belongs to Me unconditionally."

God's position is such. He is paramount. He is the highest harmonizing centre, and we must all submit cent-per-cent to Him. Any deviation from that is *anartha*. *Anartha* means 'meaningless,' it has no meaning. The only real meaning or purpose worthy to be served is the connection with the universal wave, the universal movement.

Anything besides that is *anartha*— undesirable and unnecessary. The *anarthas* will serve no purpose. We are in connection with *anarthas*, undesirable things which won't serve any real purpose towards our cause. But the real cause of our life, and the whole satisfaction of our very existence will be found only in connection with the universal wave of the whole Absolute. That is Krsna consciousness. It is the most universal, fundamental wave, and we have to catch that. Our goal, our satisfaction and the very fulfillment of our life is only to be found there, in that layer, that plane, and not in the superficial plane of nationality interest, family interest, social service, etc.—for that is provincialism.

One section is busy with many local interests, and another section wishes to stop all activity. To stop one's own movement, to do away with one's own existence, is renunciation, *samadhi*, and is also suicidal. So we have to give up renunciation as well as enjoyment.

The tendency to do evil and also the tendency to go on strike, both are to be given up. In a nation, we may find so many workers doing some wrong, going against the principle of the law; but that is hooliganism and is bad. At the same

time, to go on strike, refusing to work, is also bad. The good path is only to work for the interest of the country.

This we have to learn: from local interest we must go to the universal, the Absolute. We are not to have any local interest however extensive it may be. Whether self-centred, family-centred, village-centred or society-centred as in humanitarianism, it is all only a part of the Infinite. This is the fact, and generally we are to try to understand things in such a way. The technical words like *anartha nivrtti*, *bhava*, *asakti*, all these are covered by this understanding.

Lord Krsna has recommended in *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* how one can conquer *kama*, lust, by regulating the senses. He advises us to become acquainted with the nature of the soul, then all the problems caused by *kama* will be turned into ashes:

indriyani parany ahur

indriyebhyah param manah

manasas tu para buddhir

buddher yah paratas tu sah

evam buddheh param buddhva

samstabhyatmanam atmana

jahi satrum maha-baho

kama-rupam durasadam

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 3.42,43)

Lust is not easily accessible, but is hidden. We cannot easily trace where he lives, but he comes suddenly and, after looting, disappears.

But we are told here that really he lives in the intelligence, the mind and the senses. To conquer that lust we are to regulate the senses, but in order to do so we first have to analyse what the senses are and what is their position, and then, what is the position of the internal king of the senses, the mind. After that we are

to analyse what is the intrinsic position of the *buddhi*, the faculty of reason, judgement and intelligence. Then, with the help of reason, we are to try to find out what is in the background of that faculty of reason, of judgement and of decision making.

In the background is a pencil-thin ray whose nature is diametrically opposite to the world of experience. In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* an example is given that in the night a cloud may cover the moon.

Though the cloud obscures the moon, still the cloud can only be seen by the light of the moon.

*na rarajodupaschana, svajyotsna bhasitairghanaih aham matya bhasitaya
svabhusa puruso jyatha*

In this example the soul is likened to the moon and the *ahankara* is likened to cloud cover. The sense-consciousness, the mind and the intelligence have all combined to form a system, *ahankara*, which has covered the soul. But they are seen, and it is possible for them to act, only because there is light—the light of the soul, the moon. So by the help of our reason we must try to perceive what is above reason, and we shall come to see that it is the *atma*, the soul. In this way we may have some direct connection with the *atma*, or at least some conception, however vague, of its existence and nature. At that time our whole material aspiration will turn into trash and within ourselves we will be able to conquer all the charms of this world. The Lord's advice in *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* is to somehow or other try to obtain understanding of the true nature of our own *atma*. We are really of such a superior nature and hold a noble, dignified position in the higher plane; but lust and so many base things have come to entrap us.

Raso 'py asya, param drstva nivarttate (Bg. 2.59). By even slightly coming in contact with the dignified position of our own soul, all worldly charm will vanish; and even that will seem to be a negligible thing compared to the awakening of higher levels of realization, up to the Super-soul—Paramatma—then to Narayana and Krsna! There is so much ecstatic enjoyment on that side and it will be realized only when it will be revealed within us. Though to our present conception it is far away, still, that experiencer, that taster, is within us: it is the *jivatma*. And if we try to concentrate even for a second there, we will find what a dignified position the soul holds. We shall think, "Who are these thieves?

The intellect, mind and senses are all thieves and plunderers. They are taking me into the land of misery as if through some intricate conspiracy." It will seem like that to us.

indriyani parany ahur, indriyebhyah param manah

(Bhagavad-gita, 2.42)

Our senses are superior in comparison to all the things we experience around us. Suppose we were devoid of all our senses of touch, sight, hearing and so on, then we would have no conception of anything external. The world would mean nothing to us.

Then again, the central figure of all the senses is the mind. Someone may call but we may find: "He was calling me? Oh, I was unconscious: I was unmindful and did not hear. I have my senses but because I was unmindful I did not hear or see him." So the mind is in the centre. And the mind has two functions, *sankalpa-vikalpa*—"I want this, I don't want that—I don't want that, I want this." This is mainly the function of the mind.

Then comes the *buddhi*, intelligence. From the mind we are to go up to the *buddhi*, the reason. What is it? Discrimination. "Oh, my mind wants that, but it will bring such a reaction, so don't go to do it." The *buddhi*, the intelligence or faculty of judgement will give the warning,

"Don't go! Don't listen to what the mind says; don't obey him." That is the intelligence.

Then if going up from there, surpassing the intelligence, we search for what is next, what is above the intelligence, backing it and making the function of intelligence possible, we will be able to see, "Oh, this is my real self and everything else is an outside extension in the material world, it is all a material overcoating. I can leave it, and with only myself, my own *atma*, alone I can go up to somewhere higher. This present atmosphere is not at all necessary for me, rather it is harmful, a coating, a garment which has been thrust onto me in order that I come in connection with this bad environment." With this realization, with our soul proper we can go in a higher direction, towards Paramatma, Narayana and Krsna.

Chapter 8 Beyond the Yogi

Devotee: Maharaj, I read that in the dream state the living entity also sees. So, what is that medium by which one sees in a dream? What kind of 'eye' is that?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The mental system, that is the subtle-body within, called *sukhma-deha*, cannot only see; he has eyes, ears, the sense of touch as well as all the other senses. Everything that exists in the form of flesh and blood is also there in our subtle body; it is closer to our real self and is more perfect than this external body. Everyone has that mental system. There is a mental world with its own government where Yamaraj is the judge. Independent of the physical body, the mental body can live and move in different levels in that subtle region. Good and bad are there in degrees, but all within the jurisdiction of the three modes of nature within this *brahmanda*, this material universe.

Sri Ramanujacaryya says that dreams are not false; just as we have experiences in our waking life, we also live through many experiences in dreams. In our dreams we feel pain and pleasure, thereby many of our reactions are finished. By suffering in the physical life, the result of bad *karmma* finishes. By feeling pleasure, our *punya*, merit, is exhausted. Similarly in a bad dream we feel some pain and as a result some of our previous bad *karmma* finishes; and in a good dream when we feel happiness and pleasure, some *punya* resulting from our piety is finished. That kind of life is also 'real' in the mundane sense.

The higher planetary systems Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svar, Mahah, Jana, Tapah, Satya, are various stages within material existence, but where are they? They are not in the physical plane but in the mental plane, the world of mental experience. Devotee: So are the living entities there already living in their subtle bodies, not in gross bodies of flesh and blood? Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes. Even the trees and stones have their subtle bodies, but they are not awakened sufficiently. The degrees of awakenment are all different. Misconception under the modes of mundane nature (*guna-mayi*) extends, according to its degree, up to Satyaloka, the plane of Lord Brahma; and finally the negative side merges into Viraja and is finished. Then the spiritual plane begins with Brahmaloka, the spiritual effulgence, and ascends through the levels of spiritual variegatedness from Sivaloka to Vaikuntha. Above that is Ayodhya, then Dvaraka, and finally Vrndavana in Goloka. So gradation extends everywhere up to Svayam Bhagavan in Radha-Kunda. There are the *Rasa-lila*, the Govarddhana-lila and the Pastimes at Radha-Kunda, and in all these the standard of measurement is according to the

rasa, the *anandam*: the degree of ecstatic joy. Each individual country has its own currency such as dollars, pounds, rupees, roubles, yen, etc.; but the international standard is gold. Similarly *rasa* or *anandam* is the universal standard by which we are to measure what is high and what is low.

Devotee: Why don't the Gaudiya Vaisnavas use any *yoga* practices such as *yoga-asanas*, *pranayama*, etc. in their service to Krsna?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The Gaudiya Vaisnavas discard any artificial things. God is with the heart and that is the important part. We are to appeal to the heart and have transaction with the heart, and not that by manipulation of the natural forces we shall gain some mystic power and try to exert that on God. Is that a form of worship? For one who has a heart, the hearty transaction is the most natural. And that is service. Satisfaction is for the Lord so what is the value of trying to gain some power from elsewhere and by dint of that, to try to encroach upon Him? What is the result of doing *yoga*? It will give some power but what effect can that power have on Him? None. We are not to try to exert our energy upon Him, but the opposite is necessary. We are to consider that we are the most fallen of the fallen and the meanest of the mean. "I want Your grace. Please accept me as a slave, as Your meanest servant." This is the way to approach the higher and not that we are to gather some power and by dint of that power jump on that Superior Entity, for that is not the process of getting Him, of receiving His favour. Favour is favour!

The Lord is all-complete and all-perfect. If we want His favour we must approach keeping ourselves in the meanest position. We have no position. We are nowhere. We are wholesale dependent upon Him.

This is our natural position, our constitutional position. We are wholly dependent upon Him. So any petition to Him must be with this temperament: "I want Your favour. Your grace. Please accept me. I am so heinous, so sinful, and the meanest of the mean. You are my best friend, but neglecting You I left and went somewhere else to search for my prospect, I was so mean. I am not only a sinner but I am a traitor, a treacherous man." In this way we are to go back to our highest and most affectionate friend.

What help will this *yoga* power do for me? He is above all seduction.

Shall I think that with the power of *yoga* I shall influence Him to favour me? It

is not possible for Him to be controlled in any way by yogic power; so *yoga* can give me no benefit. What will *yoga* do for me? He is all-independent, absolute. He is perfect in Himself. To try to exert other influences upon Him will have no effect rather that will anger Him. Instead we are to approach Him with some recommendation or with a guardian.

The Guru and Vaisnavas are our guardians. We are not to go to any external power of nature but to His agents, and ask them to plead for us. By *yoga* we can acquire some subtle power, but no power can work on Him against His sweet will. We must approach Him in the line of His sweet will and with those who have faith in His sweet will.

Those who have faith in His sweet will are His devotees. Through them we must approach Him and not by any attempt through any other power, for that will give just the opposite result. If we want to know Him, it is futile! We cannot know Him by our attempts. Still, if we find such necessity, we shall pray, "Please make Yourself known to me," otherwise it is not necessary to waste our energy asking that He will reveal Himself. If we can leave the idea that we must know Him then that request becomes redundant. Rather our mood should be, "I want to satisfy You. I want to contribute something for Your satisfaction. Please accept me. You are full. You are perfect. You have no needs, but for my necessity please give me some sort of service."

Service means in the line of satisfaction to Him, and that should be our attitude to approach Him. To approach a friend, an affectionate friend, so many mystic persons should not be called to help in our attempt.

*yamadibhir yoga-pathaih, kama-lobha-hato muhuh mukunda-sevaya yadvat,
tathatmaddha nil samyati*

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.6.35)

It may be possible for us to control our senses to a certain extent and for some time by the practice of *yoga*, but *yoga* cannot give the Absolute. That He is Absolute means He is above all. Absolute means that He is self-sufficient; He is not dependent on any other thing. *Yoga* can only help us to control our mental and physical anomalies or eccentricities, that too only for the time being, not for eternity. For the time being, lust, anger, greed, illusion, etc. (*kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, etc.) all may be brought under control but only for some temporary

period. *Mukunda-sevaya*— but if we can engage ourselves in the service of Mukunda, then all disturbances will leave us once and for all. By finding the sweet taste in His service and company, all these so-called charming proposals will retire eternally. The charm for lust, the charm for anger or for greed, all these things will vanish altogether and won't come back again if only we can get the taste of serving the Lord, Mukunda.

*naham vedair na tapasa, na danena na cejyaya sakya evam-vidho drastum,
drstavān asi yaṁ mama bhaktya tv ananyaya sakya,*

aham evam-vidho 'rjjuna jñatum drastum ca tattvena, pravestum ca parantapa

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 11.53,54)

"All other means fail. Only exclusive devotion can draw Me as you see Me here, Arjjuna, but other things cannot lead to such a position.

Temporary devotion also will not be sufficient, but what is necessary is permanent, exclusive devotion."

sarvva-dharmman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja

(Bhagavad-gita 18.66)

"Reject all else and only concentrate on My own Self for that is the only sort of devotion that can draw Me to the devotee. All else is futile and shameful. It is not that someone will come with hired persons to canvas Me. No! My agents are the best benefactors to you. They are searching to canvas persons in my favour. My agents are there and not for any business purpose. Their business is to do good to others, and with this idea so many agents are out to canvas for Me. Come through them and do not seek any recommendation from outside to use various means to try to force Me to favour you. That is not the proper path, but come to Me through My own agents. They have no aspiration to fulfil for themselves. They are all-given to My service and they are wandering trying to recruit persons, to benefit them. So come through My agents, never otherwise. What is *yoga*? There is air and there are so many things but by controlling those do you think you will force Me to come to you? I am the Absolute Autocrat. I don't care for anything else. I have no necessity to care for anything else. Not any force, any tactics, any cunning methods, any canvassing— nothing can influence Me. I am the Autocrat. And admitting the line of autocracy, try to

come to Me. There are many demigods. They are making trade, but I am not amongst the commodities of their trading. None can make trade with Me. I am Absolute. I look only for devotion, exclusive devotion which is not formal, but natural, hearty and sincere. I look for that. I look for the heart and not for anything else— *bhava-grahi-janarddanah*."

patram puspam phalam toyam, yo me bhaktya prayacchati tad aham bhakty-upahrtdm, asnami prayatatmanah

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 9.26)

"Whatever My devotee offers to Me with sincere devotion, with sincere affection, I accept that. It does not matter whether it is a leaf, a flower, water, or anything else. Rich food or rich presentations are not necessary for Me, but what I want is the heart. I want sincerity and good faith. That is the highest requirement within Me."

There is a carefully written poem: "Oh Krsna, You have everything but only You do not have Your heart. Your heart has been stolen by the Gopis. You have everything except for Your heart and mind, they are not present in You for they have already been stolen by the Gopis.

So You take my heart. You accept my mind. That is what is wanting in You, so please accept my heart and mind for Yourself. Your heart is missing, and that has attracted my heart towards You, so please take it."

Chapter 9 The Foundation of Fortune

Devotee: What advice do you have for a devotee who is struggling along in his spiritual life, with no taste for Krsna consciousness?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The first question is, struggling for what?

'Struggling' means struggling for something. A struggle presupposes something—its aim and object, its purpose. So, what is the aim of that struggle?

The German philosopher, Hegel, has given his philosophy called 'Ideal Realism.' He says that the ideal is not unreal or abstract imagination, but is real and all-important whereas the material body is nothing, rather it is only a servant to obey the dictation of the ideal.

First there is the idea, then the body follows after it. So the ideal is real. This philosophy was put forward by Hegel. So, 'struggle,' but struggle for what? A struggle may be of two types.

First is the case where there is no taste for mundane enjoyment or renunciation but there is the desire for something unknown but at least above these two aims of life. If the person feels, "I can't tolerate the world of enjoyment, but also I dislike renunciation," then it is presupposed that he has some previously acquired *sukrti*, devotional credit, in the background. From his subconscious region will come the desire, the struggle for the company of a *sadhu*, a good agent, a good Master who can help Him. He will feel, "I am in a vacant position. I want some shelter. Who is there who can give me shelter? Who can save Me?" He may feel this sort of uneasiness—both dissatisfaction with the present, and also no sight of any positive engagement in the future. Yet he is unconsciously wanting something. To have this hankering for something positive presupposes some *sukrti*. This is one type of struggle.

Another is where there is no positive aim but only the aim to get out of the undesirable negative side. This desire for renunciation, to enter *samadhi* and be reduced to zero, to be finished, is like committing suicide. Just as when a person who cannot tolerate an unfavourable situation feels, "I cannot maintain my life any more," and so commits physical suicide, similarly renunciation is spiritual suicide. He feels, "I have no taste for this mundane world where there is always struggling amongst so many transient things. I have no prospect here." Feeling in this way he desires to enter into *samadhi*. This is like putting a living man into a tomb and then sealing it up. But if one is neither satisfied here in the temporary mundane world, nor wants to commit suicide and so efface his existence, then if he is even subconsciously hankering for some bright life, it means that *sukrti* is underground within the foundation of his subconsciousness. After that, some *sadhu* may come to visit him and give him some good news and instructions, "Do this, do that." He will have some tendency to follow that advice, and from that stage gradually his positive life begins.

There is an example in one Godbrother. When he was a boy of perhaps eighteen or so, he was dissatisfied with his existing life within his family household, so he went to Jagannatha Puri. Within his mind and from the bottom of his heart he wanted to find the association of a *sadhu* and join with him. At that time our Guru Maharaj was in Puri and one of his followers who was a very learned and clever man, met him and asked, "You are a very simple boy. Why have you

come here?" "I have come in search of a *sadhu*."

"Oh, then come with me!" He took him to the camp of our Srila Prabhupada, and he joined. The acquisition from his former life was such that when he went to search for the positive spiritual path he easily found it; and so he joined, and joined for ever. He joined at the age of eighteen years and received *sannyasa* at twenty-eight. But before accepting *sannyasa*, someone had discouraged him saying,

"You are so young and it is not sure how long you will live, so to take so much risk is not very wise!" He was also hesitating, and said, "Prabhupada has proposed this but I am hesitating and some of my friends are also misleading me."

I put it to Srila Prabhupada that he was hesitating. Prabhupada's response to him was, "You are frightened? Fear is in *this* world but you are going to take shelter in the *abhaya pada*, the fearless Holy Feet. Where is the fear? Don't have any apprehension. All fear is confined here in this plane, but you are going to take shelter above this area of fear. You want to enter into the fearless area, you are going to connect with the fearless world. Rather *this* world is the fearful place!"

This came from his mouth. At last he accepted, and his *sannyasa* was given by Prabhupada in Puri. Every day in the morning for about a month he used to sing Srila Prabhupada's favourite *bhajana*: *Sri Rupa Manjari pada*. Practically, Prabhupada took him from Gaya to Puri only to hear it sung by his sweet voice. He sang:

radhapadankita dhama vrndavana yara nama taha yena

asraya karila

Bhaktivinoda Thakur says, "What is Vrndavana? It is where there are the footprints of Sri Radhika. The criterion of Vrndavana is this: that it has on its head the footprints of Srimati Radharani." This is Bhaktivinoda Thakur's finding. So, if we want to see what is Vrndavana, and who is Radharani and who is Krsna, then we must take some note, some clue, and some impression from this.

Bhaktivinoda Thakur says that Radharani is all-in-all:

radhapadankita dhama vrndavana yara nama taha yena asaya karila

"Where does the name 'Vrndavana' belong? Upon whose head the footprints of Radharani are borne, that is Vrndavana!" It is all-sweet!

And there everything is sweet because the paraphernalia has all emanated from Her. Just as the entire screenplay for a film evolves from the brain of the director, who then himself may come to act his own part within it, similarly the entire paraphernalia of Vrndavana has come from Sri Radhika.

And from Sri Gaurahga we receive the combined gift of the grace of all these things. His gift is full of so much transcendental sweetness and is eternal in its play.

There is a bird called a *cataka* which always faces towards the sky praying for water. His nature is such that he can only swallow from above and cannot collect from the ground. We should be converted into that type of bird in our hankering temperament. for a divine drop of the divine sweetness, of the divine nectar which Mahaprabhu is distributing. Nectar, not honey, is the sweetest liquid of which we can ever conceive. Honey is mundane but nectar is something from above the mundane world. Honey is found here in this lower plane but nectar is only of our imagination. We have no experience of nectar in the mundane world, its character is transcendental. It is called *amrtam* or

'God's food.' There is nectar for the devotees, the godly, and poison for the demons.

Mahadeva, who gave indulgence to the demons, had to take poison generated from churning the Ocean of Milk. This appears to be a peculiar thing, but he took that poison on the order of Visnu, therefore through the connection of being engaged in Visnu's service he did not die, rather that poison became ornamental to him by making his throat blue. So sometimes Mahadeva puts a petition to Narayana, "You have given me this undesirable service only to deal with the culprits. What to do? It is Your will that I should be given charge of dealing with the demons, so sometimes I have to become friendly with them. But Your will is supreme." This is the position of Mahadeva who has the touch of the world above but who is the master of the whole of the misconceived area.

Devotee: What is the most direct and effective means to attain a taste of Krsna consciousness?

Srila Guru Maharaj:

satam prasangan mama virya-samvido bhavanti hrt-kama-rasayanah kathah taj-josaniid asv apavarga-vartmani sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramisyati

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.25)

"One will rapidly progress on the path of liberation, and naturally will develop firm faith, attraction and devotion, when he cultivates the activity of engaging in discussions about My glorious Pastimes in the association of pure devotees. Such activities are very nourishing to the ear and heart." And,

krsna-bhakti-janma-mula haya 'sadhu-sanga' krsna-prema janme, tenho punar mukhya anga

(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta. Madhya 22.83)

"By associating with the *sadhus* and gaining their mercy one can get *Krsna-bhakti* right up to the stage of *Krsna-prema*. Furthermore the practitioners very life depends on the association of the *sadhus*.

Without *sadhu-sanga* it is not possible to receive the real seeds of bhakti."

krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih kriyatam yadi kuto 'pi labhyate tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam janma-koti-sukrtair na labhyate (Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 8.70)

"Pure devotional service to Krsna cannot be obtained by performing pious activities even for millions of births. It can be purchased only by paying one price: intense eagerness. Wherever it is available, one must purchase it immediately." And,

sadhu-sastra-krpaya yadi krsnonmukha haya sei jiva nistare, maya tahare chadaya

(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya 20.120)

"If, by the blessings of a pure devotee and the Scripture, a *jiva*- soul becomes devoted to Krsna he naturally becomes liberated and Maya withdraws."

Do you have your answer?

Devotee: Yes. The most effective means of attaining Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to associate with the exalted devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa— *sadhu-sanga*.

Srila Guru Maharaj: What does it mean to keep company and to have association with the *sadhus*? What have you understood to be *sanga*?

Devotee: *Pariprasnena sevaya*. (By relevant enquiry from a real Guru and by serving him.)

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, but that is not up to the mark. *Sadhu-sanga* means it must be of this nature:

*dadati pratigrhnati guhyam akhyati prccliati bhunkte bhojayate caiva sad-
vidham priti laksanam*

(*Sri Upadesamṛta* 4)

This is *sanga*, and in this way we can get the benefit of the association of a *sadhu*. Firstly, to give something to *sadhu* for his pleasure, and to take something from him as his *Prasadam*— *dadati pratigrhnati* Then, *guhyam akhyati prcchati*, whatever is concealed within our own heart, we are to divulge the whole of that to him; and we are to receive "his instruction. *Bhunkte bhojayate caiva*— we are to give the raw materials to him for his taking of *Prasadam*, and then we are to receive his remnants; *sadhu-sanga* means this.

Devotee: What is the process for one to test whether or not a *sadhu* or a Guru is genuine? Isn't it that one should first of all try to be sincere himself, then he will get a sincere Guru, and *sadhu-sanga*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: But from where will that sincerity come?

*bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhaktasangena parijayate sat-sangah prapyate pumbhih
sukrtaih purwa-sancitaih*

(*Brhan-ndradiya Purana*)

Actually we can recognize a *sadhu* by *sukṛti*. Apparently we can know him from the *sastra*, the Scriptures, because the *sastra* helps us to know who is a *sadhu*, and the *sadhu* gives us the interpretation of the *sastra*. So *sadhu* and *sastra* are interdependent, but the *sadhu* holds the more important position and the *sastra*

has the secondary position.

The living *sastra* is the *sadhu*, but to know who is Guru, who is *sadhu*, we are to consult the descriptions given about them in the Scriptures. The symptoms of the *sadhu*, both of the Guru as well as the disciple, have been written in the *Bhagavatam*, in the *Gita* and in

the *Upanisads*. In the *Bhagavatam* we find: *tasmad gurum prapadyeta, jijnasuh sreyah uttamam Sabde pare ca nisnatam, brahmany upasamasrayam*

(*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 11.3.21)

"A person in search of the ultimate good should surrender to the Guru who knows well the Vedic Scriptures (*sabda-brahman*) and the Supreme Absolute Lord (*Parabrahman*), and for whom the mundane world holds no charm whatsoever." And the *Gita* says: *tad viddhi pranipatena, pariprasnena sevaya upadeksyanti te jnanam, jnaninas tattva-darsinah*

(*Srimad Bhagavad-gita* 4.34)

"You will be able to attain all this transcendental knowledge by satisfying the enlightened Spiritual Master with prostrate obeisances, relevant enquiry and sincere service. Great souls who are most expert in scriptural knowledge and endowed with direct realization of the Supreme Absolute Truth will teach you that divine knowledge."

So in the *Upanisads*, in *Bhagavatam* and in *Bhagavad-gita* it is clearly mentioned what should be the symptom of a Guru and also what should be that of a disciple. If such a qualified disciple comes to a qualified Guru then the real transaction begins. Otherwise there may be so many bogus transactions; such black-marketing is going on in this world in the name of religion. But from the association of the real devotee comes devotion, *bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-sangena parijayate*. And, *sat-sanga prapyate pumbhih, sukrtaih purwa-sancitaih* — one can come to a proper guide, a *sddhu*, as a result of his previous activity. *Sukrti* is of two kinds, *jnata* and *ajnata*.

Ajnata-sukrti is in the beginning when, unknown to him, he is utilized in the service of the Lord through the *sadhu*. Suppose a man has built a *dharmmasala*. So many persons of different types come to stay there, but because they take advantage of the energy of the builder, the results of their actions will go to him.

A dacoit may come and stay. A pilgrim may also come, and a *sadhu* also. If a dacoit will stay, then

because he utilizes the energy of the owner of the *darmmasala*, the owner will have to take some bad reaction (*papa*), and will suffer for that. But if an honest man will stay there then the owner will get some *punya*, pious credit. In this way *papa* and *punya* will come to him, but after duly suffering or enjoying those fruits, they will be finished.

However if a real *sadhu*, a devotee, will stay there and utilize the owner's energy, then that owner will acquire something permanent.

nehabhikrama-naso 'sti, pratyavayo na vidyate svalpam apy asya dharmasya, trayate mahato bhayat

(*Srimad Bhagavad-gita* 2.40)

"In this *bhakti-yoga* there is no loss of initial endeavour and there is no diminution of results. Even the slightest performance of this *bhakti-yoga* saves one from the great fear of birth and death in this material world."

Some permanent acquisition is deposited in his 'account,' and everything else, both the happiness resulting from accommodating a good, honest man in the worldly sense, as well as the suffering resulting from his accommodating a dacoit, will be finished. This sort of acquisition is permanent, and when it accumulates to a sufficient degree it will attract the man to do some sort of vague service to the *sadhus*, though not very consciously. That is also accumulated and when it reaches a certain stage the search for the truth will awaken within him. He will think, "For what are those *sadhus* living?" Then he will approach them, and if he goes in the proper mood as described in the Scriptures, the transaction will begin. The association, or connection with a real *sadhu* occurs by some underground activity known as *sukrti*. *Sukrti* is of two types:

ajnata and *jnata*— unconsciously acquired, and consciously acquired— *sat-sanga prapyate pumbhih, sukrtaih purvva-sancitaih*.

Of this *sukrti* stage, Mahaprabhu says:

brahmamda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva guru-krsna-prasade paya bhakti-lata-bija

(*Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya 19.151*)

"Wandering throughout the material universe, the very fortunate living entity who receives the grace of Guru and Kṛṣṇa receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service."

Sukṛti is described by the word *bhagyavan*, good fortune. There are so many different types of *sādhus*. Among the *tyāgis* there are so many different classes: the naked *nāga babas* and others. And among the theistic group also there are so many different sections like the Ramanujas, the Ramanandis, the Nimbarkas, the Vallabhis and the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The Gaudiya Vaisnavas are the followers of Mahāprabhu. So even in the theistic section there is a graded

classification, but it is through our *sukṛti* that we shall be guided from the subconscious area to have connection with a *sādhu* of a particular section.

Chapter 10 Dictation of Sri Guru

Devotee: I know that at present I am a conditioned soul and am in Maya, but it is said that I have an eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. So is it that I will only know that relationship when I become purified?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, when the mist will be cleared the sun will shine in its full pristine glory. The mist of misunderstanding, in the form of *anyābhilāsa*, *karmma*, *jñāna*, etc. is a covering. As that covering is gradually dissolved, the internal relationship will appear.

Devotee: Is this eternal relationship always the same or can it be changed, such as from *vatsalya*, parental loving affection, to *madhura*, conjugal love, or from *madhura* to *dasya*, servitude?

Srila Guru Maharaj: That will be known gradually. When the barrier, the cover, will be cleared, it will become revealed. That separating wall will gradually fade and as it becomes thinner and thinner the relationship will be conceived. It is a gradual process and at first will be vague. When we will come to the stage of *bhava-bhakti*—heart's Devotion—then it will come within our understanding somewhat, and gradually will become clearer.

There are various stages leading to *bhava*: *anartha-nivṛtti*, *nistha*, *ruci*, *asakti*,

then *bhava*. When devotion will reach the stage of *bhava*, then of course that eternal relationship will appear to a certain extent in a vague way. Then by a gradual process the definite identification, the particular quality of attraction one will feel for Krsna, will become clear. The attraction, the connection between the two, is intervened by the foreign propensities of *anyabhilasa*, *karmma*, *jfiana*, etc. As that barrier becomes thinner the nature of *rasa* as well as its depth and intensity will gradually be disclosed. It is not vague or a product of the imagination but it is more clear than the sun.

Devotee: When the Guru is here he engages us for something that Krsna wants. But in the absence of our Guru we may do some devotional service according to our own initiative. How do we know whether Krsna actually wants that particular activity from us?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Preferably we shall enquire from a *Siksa-Guru* but if none is available then we shall try to ask our internal Guru:

"In such a case what may be required of me? My Master, please reveal this." We shall have to make this appeal to our internal *Caitya-Guru* and proceed accordingly. *Nahi kalyana-krt kascid durgatim tata gacchati (Bg. 6.40)*: The sincere will have nothing about which to repent. He who is sincere to his own self will have such dictation as will help him to progress in his spiritual life. He will ask his Master within, "In such a case what should please my Gurudeva? I shall do that. As much as I can understand and feel I shall do." This sincere internal approach will be the last resort, but if any outside *Siksa-Gurus* are available we must consult with them.

Devotee: Sometimes *Siksa-Gurus* have differences of opinions.

Srila Guru Maharaj: In that case also we are to appeal to our own inner Guru, "Please suggest to me which advice I should follow?"

Please give me some internal suggestion otherwise what can I do?" If any difference of opinion should come from the outside guides, then in every case we are to make this appeal to our own conscience and follow that dictation from within. If possible we shall go to another recognized *Siksa-Guru* whom we can consult regarding these differences of opinion. But if there also we fail, then we must appeal to our internal Guru. There is no other alternative.

Devotee: I may ask the *Caitya-Guru*, the Guru within my heart, but how shall I

know whether the response is coming from the Guru or only from my mind?

Srila Guru Maharaj: That will be according to our own realized position. It may not be clear always, but we have no other alternative.

Ultimately it is up to our inner judge to decide: "I came to my Gurudeva but my inner selection took me there. How did I leave my previous environment and come to my Gurudeva? My internal guide helped me to accept this person as Guru, so I cannot neglect that guide within me."

If my dictator within has taken me to a true Guru then he is not a traitor, so we can consult with him as a reliable friend.

Devotee: We are just neophyte devotees and so do not feel so pure as to be able to communicate with the *Caitya-Guru*.

Srila Guru Maharaj: It is so and therefore it will be better, safer, more helpful and easier if it is possible for us to secure a *Siksa-Guru*.

But in an extreme case when that is not possible, then we are to appeal fervently to our own Guru within, the *Caitya-Guru*.

Also my own Divine Master may be living but if I am posted for duty in a far away place and some urgent decision is required then what shall I do? If an immediate decision is required and there is no time to receive my Master's order I may appeal to my inner Guru and I shall do that which I consider my Guru will be pleased to accept. I shall take up my duty and work with the assertion, "This will please my Gurudeva."

It is mentioned that one who has surrendered may not commit any offence. If you are surrendered and then appeal, "What am I to do, my Master? Please dictate to me," and do accordingly with sincerity, then if it is wrong also, you are not to be a party to that wrong because you did not consciously want to disobey the Guru—you tried your utmost to obey him cent-per-cent. But you are not a perfect person, still, from your position, as much as possible you have done and he will be satisfied with that. He is all-knowing. He is omniscient and will see, "He has tried his best."

So from our position we shall try our best and we will be rewarded accordingly. But we must be cautious that within us there may not be any insincerity,

duplicity, or hypocrisy, for such things are self-suicidal. *Nahi kalyana-krt kascid durgatim tata gacchati (Bg. 6.40)*: One who is sincerely trying for the good is never to be deceived. In whatever plane we may live we must be true to our own self, to our own conscience. To our own capacity we must be true to that plane, and when we rise higher we must consider and follow the faith of our new plane. We must not be insincere.

The dictation of Sri Guru is also similar in that he gives us some order according to our stage of spiritual development. To one who is in a lower stage he will give a particular order, to one in a higher stage he will give another order, and one higher still will be given yet another.

He will give us orders according to our capacity, stage and nature; otherwise it will be impossible for us to progress. So according to our stage our duty should be attached and the results expected accordingly: a man who has the capacity to lift a weight of ten kilograms will not be instructed to lift a hundred.

Devotee: Sometimes we feel we have sincerity but later we realize that the sincerity we had was only superficial.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Of course it may be possible in all cases to feel in this way. We are to be dealt with according to our stage. A boy should be given the standard of examination of a boy, not of a grown-up man. The questions in a boys' examination will be of a different standard than those for the adults. Gradually we will be taken to the higher standard. *Paroksa-vado vedo 'yam, balanam anusasanam (Bhagavatam, 11.3.44)*. Just as a child is guided with some modified policy, similarly that sort of process has been adopted in dealing with ourselves.

Devotee: What should we do if sometimes the Guru should engage us in service above our capacity or ability to perform?

Srila Guru Maharaj: If you think that the particular duty is beyond your capacity you will simply inform Gurudeva, "It is very difficult for me to do, and I do not think myself to be fit to efficiently discharge this sort of duty. If I tell you this doubt in my mind then you may wish to appoint some other service." But if he still says, "No, you are to do this," then you will do as best you can. If you have faith, considering him to be a real Guru then you can attempt to do that duty the best you can. You must consider that he has some super-motive, that

some higher purpose will be served by engaging you in such activity.

Devotee: This Krsna consciousness is very, very beautiful. The cult of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is very sweet. Many people become attracted by Krsna and by Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu but why after some time do we find that some devotees lose their faith and go away?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The first thing it depends on is the intensity of the *sukrti* of the devotee. And secondly is of course his free-will, his independence. The circumstances will also have their effect. Every action is the combined result of several factors. In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* we find:

pancaitani maha-baho, karanani nibodha me sankhye krtante

proktani, siddhaye sarvva-karmmanam

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 18.13)

If we analyse any one event we will find that it is the combination of different forces from different quarters. So generally we can consider that the devotee's situation will depend on his previous initial merit, his present free-will, the environment and the mercy of the Lord. His free-will may cause him to commit *Vaisnava-aparadha*. And his previous merit, *sukrti*, will tend to keep him floating at the standard he previously acquired. By his free-will he may commit offences. Also there is the free-will of the environment: the surrounding paraphernalia may grant him their mercy. There are many contributory factors.

Devotee: One of your Godbrothers told me that we are chanting Hare Rama in the *Mahamantra* but we are not supposed to pronounce 'Rama.' He said this is not *suddha*, pure, but we should say 'Ram.' Is this correct?

Srila Guru Maharaj: 'Rama' is the true pronunciation, but if one says 'Ram' that does not mean it has no value—it will have some effect. The internal feeling underlying the sound is more important than the pronunciation. One may say Krsna, Kanai, or so many Names but it depends mainly on the *bhava*, the internal realization and feeling of the meaning of the word.

A child has a particular registered name. His mother may call him by a sound not fully according to that word's pronunciation, but that does not detract anything.

Her affection is all in all. If a mother calls her child by a name, the name may not be pronounced in the perfectly correct way but the affection behind her calling his name is more valuable. So whether we say 'Rama' or 'Ram' may not be considered to be very important. The internal feeling with which the Name is taken is of much greater relevance.

Devotee: Sometimes we introduce the *Mahamantra* to new persons who have no idea or feeling about what or who is Rama and who is Krsna. How should they pronounce the name Rama?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Naturally they should chant 'Rama,' not 'Ram,'

for that is the real pronunciation. If one pronounces it as 'Ram' that does not mean that the whole thing is spoiled, but 'Rama' is the grammatically correct pronunciation. Everything depends on the heart, the feeling and the sincere dedication. The highest importance is your earnestness of surrender. The child may call his father by the name 'Papa' or by any disfigured sound, but that is overlooked. The inner earnestness is always to be reckoned.

Devotee: While introducing the chanting process to many new persons we find that, because of some previous idea, some do not like the Hare Krsna *Mahamantra*. Can we tell them something else such as *Govinda jaya jaya*...?

Srila Guru Maharaj: That depends upon their stage of devotion, and that is why you find a particular section will chant *Govinda jaya jaya*, *Govinda jaya jaya*— but when asked to pronounce *Hare Krsna* they show no enthusiasm.

Devotee: Our Guru Maharaj has instructed us to chant a minimum of sixteen rounds daily. We are neophyte devotees and sometimes don't have so much attraction for chanting sixteen rounds. What can we do to become more attracted to chanting?

Srila Guru Maharaj: The most important thing is to engage in service. Service of the Name and 'service of the Guru-Vaisnava are almost equal but still to a certain extent the basis must be the service of the Holy Name. Your Guru Maharaj introduced a daily minimum of sixteen rounds, and our Guru Maharaj instructed that we must chant at least four rounds per day on the *main*, the rosary. But this is a minor difference because our Guru Maharaj wanted that we be very busily engaged in the various services, but we must see that the *mala* does not fast. Some sort of service must be done to her by way of chanting at least four

rounds daily. That was his instruction but he also instructed that when one had the opportunity he could chant more and more.

The general standard set by Mahaprabhu was not only sixteen rounds, but four times sixteen which equals one lakh (100,000) Names. This is particularly so for one who is not within the body of an organized society and especially if he is living individually. When one is in an organized body he always has orders from the superiors to do this and that and thereby he engages in service; so the minimum quantity of chanting becomes a little relaxed from the sixty four rounds. But in the case of *grhasthas*, householders living separately from the main body of devotees, they especially should chant one lakh of Names daily. That is the general standard recommended by Mahaprabhu and by our Guru Maharaj. But when one is in an organized body and is required to do service running here and there, sometimes he is so busy that he can't even find any opportunity to sleep in the night; in that case he will try to chant at least four rounds. He is so busily engaged that within twenty-four hours he is not taking any rest but still he is required to chant a minimum of four rounds, whereas the general recommendation is that one who lives individually as a *grhastha* should chant at least one lakh of Names.

Mahaprabhu asked and advised us to purify ourselves with the help of Divine Sound. But. the sound should be proper transcendental Krsna consciousness; and in this *kali yuga*, the age of controversy, there will be only the minimum demand from us for our purification. The word *kali* comes from *kalah* meaning 'quarrel, controversy.' We are cautious about everything: everyone thinks, "No, I won't accept anything without some proof."

The mind is very suspicious, so we should take advantage of Divine Sound. Only the very minimum demand is necessary from us, yet the transformation which will occur in us will be very great. To have some *Sraddha*, faith, is the minimum demand, the minimum admission fee required of us: "If I do this, if I attend to this *sankirttana*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of God, then everything will be done." That underground faith must be there, and it will help us. That sincere cooperation from the heart is necessary for Krsna consciousness, and that can purify very quickly.

To have faith that this process of Krsna consciousness will purify us, is the minimum demand. One must think, "If I attain this, everything will be done." If such a sort of generous, wide conviction is there within us along with a sincere

mood of cooperation, then that can help us very quickly. That 'cooperation' means cooperation with the Divine Sound, the sound aspect of the Supreme. It is easily approachable for the beginners, and from that many other aspects of the Infinite will come to help us.

Beginning with the universal sound aspect, which is easily approachable, other aspects will follow in its retinue, gradually. But our faith must be heartfelt and sincere. "I am in difficulty, and this will give real relief to all my troubles. It will put an end to all the troubles I am experiencing now as well as any I am to experience in future. I am a bona fide student of searching my own real inner interest. I must be faithful to my own self. I feel that I am uneasy here in this world and I must search for some home comfort. If I am sincere I know that the way forward will be open to me, and that it is not difficult: it is there in the sound aspect of the Supreme. That Greatest Reality is Himself present also within the Divine Sound. This Divine Sound is not an imaginary thing Even though to my present conception it is coming and going appearing and disappearing, it is not a trifling, transient thing. It is the Reality."

And for a beginner, that ear experience is a great thing. Sound carries things from far away, and the ear can catch them. The eye-experience is not able to see so far.

Chapter 11 Distributing Divinity

Mahaprabhu has issued a general order, "Whomever you meet, talk with him only about Krsna."

yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa amara ajnaya 'guru' hana tara ei desa

"Whomever you find, talk with him only about Krsna. In that case, I am your Guru." Mahaprabhu has given this most broad and wide advice. The underlying feeling is, "Do relief work. All are in danger, acute danger. So don't consider so many minor things but go on with relief work and connect all fully with Krsna. The jaw of death is devouring them—save them! Now they are in the human species, but after death they may be lost in some other species. So, while their heads are on the surface, try to hold them, otherwise they may dive deep into the inner current and you won't be able to see them. From the human species they may go down to another species and be lost waiting there. There are so many different layers, but when they are floating, their heads are seen above the water, catch them, save them, otherwise at the next moment they may go down under the water and they will be lost without trace. So wherever you find them, somehow connect them with Krsna. Try to give them *that* connection. It is so urgent: 'Take the Name Krsna - always! You can have no plea of, I am taking food, or, 'I am going to sleep.'"

Our Guru Maharaj wanted the continuous attempt. He said, "While taking food, or going to bed, doing anything or going anywhere, keep connection with Krsna. Only try to keep His connection." Our connection with Krsna is so urgent. What a valuable life that is, and where are we?—in the jaws of mortality! So, everyone needs to be saved. Save them. Do relief work. In this general activity no specific order is necessary. It is a general thing; it is common sense in the devotional school and by this process you will be helped yourself.

You will be able to keep yourself from sinking just as by the movement of one's hands and feet one can keep himself floating on water—it is something like that. *Kirttana* will help you in that way. So try to practise Krsna consciousness, any time and every time, to anyone and everyone.

There is an article in which our Guru Maharaj addressed his disciples: *vipada uddharana bandhu-gana*: "You are my saviours. You are all saviours to me in my danger; in the real danger of my life." He addressed his disciples in such a way: "You are all my saviours. You have given me support. You have come to

hear me, and so I have the chance of *kirttana*, *Krsna-kirttana*. So you have come to save me. You are supplying food to me, otherwise I would have died without engagement. In this eternal atmosphere we are helpless without the cultivation of Krsna consciousness. You have all come to give me engagement in *Krsna-kirttana* and so you have come to save me from my dangerous position."

He addressed his disciples in such a way. It is so deep, "You are all my friends, you have come to release me from my danger; to save me from my danger."

He saw his disciples in such a great way—and this is reality. So *Krsna-kirttana* is the only life-giving, life-saving thing in this world.

Without Krsna consciousness the souls are going down deeper into the unknown quarter.

Srila Guru Maharaj (to a devotee): You have returned here to the Math after taking the Name of Krsna throughout the world! *Krsna-kirttana* was so dear to our Guru Maharaj, and especially to carry Krsna consciousness to the West. His incarnation at this time was mainly meant for that—to take it to the Western civilization.

Devotee: In the countries where I preach, the law says that everybody has to have a job, therefore the devotees are all working. In addition to their regular work they also do *puja* and so on. Sometimes they say it is becoming 'mechanical'—their *puja*, *sadhana*, lectures, etc. are becoming mechanical. So their question is, how to keep everything in such a way that it is fresh?

Srila Guru Maharaj: How can it be mechanical? 'Mechanical' will be that which is ordered by the government. Physically we are to observe that, but our inner tendency will be towards the worship. Then how can that be mechanical? That is real, and the mechanical thing will be the outer show which the government requires of us.

When Mahaprabhu began His *sankirttana* preaching mission, at that time the two brothers Rupa and Sanatana were engaged in the service of the king in Gauda-desa. They were very high scholars and studied the Scriptures. Sanatana found that the time for the *Yuga-avatara*, the Lord's incarnation for *kali-yuga* to preach *Nama-sankirttana* was drawing near. So he was alert: "Has that incarnation appeared? And where?" Then when he heard that in Nabadwip

Nama-sankirttana, the preaching of the Holy Name, was already begun by Sri Chaitanyadeva as Gauranga, he could trace that the *Avatara*, the incarnation of the Lord, must have come there, and that Gauranga was that *Avatara*.

Then he wrote a letter to Mahaprabhu: "We are fallen souls and are engaged in the management of this government which is anti-Hindu.

We are engaged in such a position, and outwardly we are affected by this influence. So what will be our future?"

Mahaprabhu replied to them with a letter, in which he wrote:

para-vyasanim nan vyagrapi grha'karmmasu tad evasvadayaty antar

nava-sanga-rasayanam

(Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 1.211)

"A married lady who has love and affection for another gentleman may be seen to be always engaged in her household activities but her heart always realizes, or tastes, the company of that person whom she loves. Though outwardly she is seen to be very busy with household work, at heart she's always enjoying the company of her beloved.

(Similarly, outwardly you may be captured and may be seen to be busy in the association of the government's activities, but your heart is not there. It is searching something, and it is receiving the benefit of the association of that inner substance.)"

So others cannot capture our heart; they can control our physical activity, but whenever we shall do something in the form of worship, of *Harinama*, our heart will go there. So how can that be mechanical?

The mechanical side will be the outer side; and the sincere side will be the inner. The man is inside. The man proper is not found in his forced activity. Generally also ordinary men do like that: they outwardly show their cooperation and show that they are not interfering with politics, but internally the heart cannot be captured by anyone. The devotee's heart will go towards the Lord.

Of course when great personages like Christ, Mohammed, or Sri Chaitanyadeva

Himself come for the good of the public, they preach openly, thus causing disturbance to the existing order and there is some clash; they cross over that and are victorious. But as far as ordinary people are concerned, the government does not generally challenge them or interfere in their private affairs. But when preaching from a centre where there is the sort of inspiration, "You fight with the external circumstances and establish this particular creed and thereby save the people," in this case there will be some difficulty. There it will be necessary to fight with any anti-party. But for the private individual's practising life that is not necessary.

Devotee: In some countries the devotees are not allowed to preach.

They are allowed to worship in their houses, but outside they are not allowed to preach, so what do you recommend for them so that they may advance in spiritual life?

Srila Guru Maharaj: To do whatever is possible—to make the best of a bad bargain—that should be the policy. Whatever is possible to do, you should take that advantage inside the house. Later, if the Lord wishes, favourable circumstances will come and then you will push out. At present, you alone cannot fight with them in this respect, so as much as possible, you will do it inside. But if the Lord wishes for preaching there outside. He will give you favourable circumstances and then you can go out. Otherwise save yourself first, and do as much as possible within the circumstances with the policy of 'making the best of a bad bargain.' When the special will of the Lord will come to devour the whole and change the people's hearts wholesale, then the circumstances will be otherwise; but at present first save yourself, and then do as much as is possible to make progress, and be satisfied with that. Just fighting is not necessary, but to keep up the very life, that is necessary. The fire, the spark is there; when it will be in a favourable environment it will be transformed into a conflagration. The spark must be maintained.

Devotee: So, how can we maintain the fire?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In your heart; and whomever you find to be favourable, you can spread it to them, but in a restricted way, not very boldly asserting or pushing onwards. Keeping within that limited boundary do as much as possible without inviting the outward clear fight. And don't enter into politics.

As much as possible, you must try. But that means to be prepared to risk everything, and to die, to be a martyr. But to actually fight is not necessary. As much as possible you will follow *yukta-vairagya*, the middle path. *Yukta-vairagya* means not a clear, external fight, but to go on, to maintain everything in a consonance, in harmony with the external circumstances. And whenever you get any chance to advance, capture it—in this way you should go on.

So, 'wait and see,' and do your duty. Don't rush ahead forcefully or hastily otherwise your energy will be wasted: the higher quality energy will be wasted in a lower class of fight. The higher quality substance will be wasted. Though actually it is not really wasted, but

for the time being it will be checked. No energy used in service is wasted.

nehabhikrama-naso 'sti, pratyavayo na vidyate svalpam apy asya dharmasya, trayate mahato bhayat

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 2.40)

"Even a small beginning in this devotional service cannot go in vain, nor can any loss be suffered. The most insignificant practice of such devotional service saves one from the all-devouring fear of repeated birth and death in this world."

Still, the best policy is not to invite any fight, but to approach in a mild way, ready to make the best of a bad bargain. Otherwise, if you go directly to attack, you will be killed or imprisoned. But that is also one type of policy! One may be imprisoned, but also because of one's incarceration the atmosphere may change. Or, if one is murdered like Christ, then some influence may also come out of such a life-sacrificing position. That also we find, but that is an extreme step.

We want the middle course. We will wait and see, and take any good chance to advance, but not waste our energy in the first fight. This is the policy. One who wants victory won't be very rash but he will be very diplomatic—sometimes coming back, sometimes making progress, and sometimes taking a firm stand. So, military force is not all, but the strategy and tactics have their position.

One kind of policy also is that the military may attack the enemy from another side. Similarly in your preaching duties you may try to make some progress where there is not so much restriction from the authorities. Then if those people should accept your preaching propositions they will become strong, and the

opposition will be influenced from that direction. We won't go to attack from this side, but if it is more suitable to attack from the other side, or from the rear, then we can prepare our army there. So, instead of going immediately to capture a particular section, you may preach somewhere else within that region. The influence will gradually spread until it reaches the neighbours of that section and ultimately they themselves will be influenced a little later.

It is also not necessary that our attention for preaching be drawn specifically to a certain section. There are so many people to be helped. When I was in Madras some people came and said, "Oh, you do not help the diseased people and the poor. You do not attend any hospital or any death-bed, but if they die, to whom will you preach? What is your answer?"

I answered, "Suppose there is a famine and some food is given by the government. If I am distributing that to so many people all around who are begging food but one man runs away, should I stop my distribution and run after him? or, because there are so many people here, shall I continue distributing? There is no want of people to receive the distribution—there is a whole throng, so should I stop distributing?"

Similarly everywhere there are so many souls to receive our preaching. They are needy, and leaving them we shall not go to dogmatically seek a particular section and only run after them, for that has no value. Needy persons are everywhere—there is no dearth of people to receive what we have, even if it is only a little. You have the duty to distribute devotion to the public, but there is no dearth of recipients. Everywhere on every side of you there is demand, so you can go on distributing where it is necessary and favourable—not that leaving a particular group who are demanding, you will select one particular place only and go there. Only if your energy is overflowing, then you can go. Otherwise there are so many places where you can distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so utilize yourself there—that is to make the best of a bad bargain. And if you find some evil influence, some anti-party coming to cause disturbance to your preaching of nectar, then you will oppose them but only as much as is possible within your power.

We are to follow the middle path, just as in the case of *vairagya*, renunciation, we follow *yukta-vairagya*. Too much renunciation will waste our energy, and too much indulgence is also a waste of energy, therefore we are advised to follow the middle path, and that is called *yukta-vairagya*.

*naty asnatas tu yogo 'sti, na caikantam-anasnatah na cati-svapna-silasya,
jagrato naiva carjjuna*

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 6.16)

"Oh Arjjuna, *yoga* practice is impossible for anyone who overeats, undereats, oversleeps, or undersleeps."

The middle path has been recommended: too much of anything is to be left aside. If one attempts to live without sleep or without food, that is bad; and too much food, or too much sleep is also bad. We are advised to accept the middle path, and that will be more progressive and fruitful. So to 'make the best of a bad bargain' should be the policy. We are not to specifically invite a fight, and also we are not to only avoid it. The middle course will always be helpful for us. We are not to lose our energy, to waste it only for fighting, but it is necessary for us to give the positive thing and engage our energy there. If we can give a thing to the left side, why should we be determined to go to the right side and thereby waste our energy? Our business will be to give, to distribute the nectar, and we shall have no stubbornness to distribute nectar on the right side only. If any opposition comes, we can go to the left side and distribute there.

Distribution of nectar and saving people is our object of life and not to concentrate on, or be biased towards, a particular group. Wherever and however we get the facility, by that way we shall go. If a particular route is considered to be dangerous, than we shall go by another, neither wasting our energy nor the opportunity.

So *yukta-vairagya*, the middle course, is to make the best of a bad bargain. It means neither inviting a fight nor avoiding it, but taking the middle course. According to our capacity we will be able to face the opposition. But merely love of opposing is not necessary. We should have no prejudice for anything. Unprejudiced we shall only engage in the positive line—in that way we shall move. We should live for the positive interest, and not for the love of any negative things such as, "I love to fight with the enemies." To fight with the enemies, that is one thing, and to distribute nectar to the public at large is another. In order to do that, you must first know the proper conception and all the circumstances yourself, and only then try to give that to others. No false representation will be helpful, so first be sure of your knowledge, then distribute it. 'Half-truth is more dangerous than a falsehood.'

In only twelve years Swami Maharaj did such a miracle. It is inconceivable. What he has done is more than a miracle. So, I say it is was not his power, but inspired by some higher agency he did it. That is also his credit, that he could invite the higher help. He had such great hankering for preaching—any time and every time. What Mahaprabhu came here for, that is the best necessity of everyone. So any engagement for any purpose other than to preach the doctrine of Mahaprabhu is not only a waste of energy, but it is a loss for the whole population.—The fittest thing necessary for all time to come and for everyone is Krsna consciousness; Krsna's connection. To try to connect whoever you come across with Krsna is the highest benefit of everyone. And without that, whatever engagement we shall do will not only be a loss of energy but disservice to the people by drawing their attention to some bogus enterprise—it is bad and injurious. So only give connection with Krsna, the Infinite Lover, the beloved Absolute.

Try to give everyone connection with Him.

Chapter 12 Our Greatest Wealth

If I show myself to be a soldier but always try to remain within the fort then I am not a soldier. But still, to be a soldier for Mahaprabhu, to preach His mission we must be careful. "Before going to attend a seriously diseased patient, if we are not strong but are feeling some weakness, then we are to intimate, to our Master: "This is my situation and if you think it appropriate, for the time being you may change my field of service." But we also shall have to keep in mind that we will need to become sufficiently strong in order to be able to attend to that type of serious patient. If we are preachers, the patients may be prostitutes, dacoits or wealthy men but still we shall have to approach them for the service of Krsna, and we must be bold enough and healthy enough for that duty. At the same time we must not be trespassers and on the way take tilings that are meant for Krsna, for that will make us traitors—unfaithful servants.

kiba va karite pare, kama krodhe sadhakere

yadi haya sadhu-janara sanga

Narottama Dasa Thakur said, "If we have the favour of the great personages then what can such types of temptation do to us? They can't do anything. If we work under our guardian and he is very careful, very strong and very judicious then no

temptation can do any harm to us." This attitude is the key to the success of life. Generally, according to our capacity we shall try to move in this way, and at the same time we shall keep in our mind that to attain to our highest position it is necessary to be able to deal with all the serious things, even the most serious, otherwise there will be some defect in us.

Wholesale conversion must come within us that we are servitors and not masters. This is the case with fame also. Name and fame, *pratistha*, is the most subtle, most dangerous enemy. It is the highest enemy and at the same time it is the most subtle. *Pratistha*, to take name, fame and credit for one's own self without giving it to Gurudeva, is the greatest enemy there is and it is very difficult to detect.

Three things in particular are very dangerous for the devotees: *kanak*, *kamini* and *pratistha* — money, women and fame.

Devotee: How can we detect *pratistha* within ourselves?

Srila Guru Maharaj: That comes with the development of internal perfection and our continuous thankfulness to Gurudeva. It is necessary to understand and feel that everything comes from above: "I have nothing. I have no position and therefore my present situation always depends on the mercy of my Gurudeva. It may be withdrawn from me at any moment. Whatever I may have is not a fixed thing in me. It is not as a matter of right but is only extended grace in me. The moment it is withdrawn I am nowhere. It is all Krsna's *svarupa-sakti*. I am *tatastha-sakti* and have no capital. I am working on the capital of my Master. I have no capital of my own." We must be able to remain on such a plane of thinking and realize that, "Without His help, without His grace, I am in darkness. My fate is dark. As long as He extends His grace in me I can see. If the light is withdrawn, the eye is helpless." We are to realize the position that it is not our birth-right.

By our birth we are *tatastha-sakti*, marginal potency, and whatever we have found, it is the gracious extension of *svarupa-sakti* in us. Our Guru and the Vaisnavas are the proprietors. It is *their* wealth and property; it all belongs to them.

At the same time it never occurs that the Guru and Vaisnavas withdraw their grace from the faithful. Such cruel activity can never be seen, rather they are

busy to extend their circle and they never withdraw; that is our solace, our consolation. But it is not a matter of right that we can make some demand. There must be no demand and no challenge. The challenging spirit towards the Vaisnavas must be eliminated for ever. We are living on their grace, their *Prasada*.

Uddhava said to the Lord:

tvayopabhukta-srag-gandha-vaso' lankara-carccitah

ucchista-bhojino dasas, tava mayam jayema hi

"Adorned with the articles that have been offered to You, such as garlands, fragrant clothing, and ornaments, we. Your personal servitors who partake of Your holy remnants alone, will certainly be able to conquer Your illusory energy (Maya)." And Lord Krsna in *Gita*. said,

yajna-sistasinah santo, mucyante sarvva-kilbisaih

bhunjate te tv agham papa, ye pacanty atma-karanat

(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 3.13)

"Saintly persons who partake of the remnants of sacrifice become liberated from all the sins arising from the five kinds of violence to living beings. But those who cook for their own consumption, those sinners eat only sin."

We are entitled only to taste the remnants left by the Vaisnavas. We are to accept those remnants and continue our lives in that way without any rights or demands. This is similar to *Aryyan sanskriti*, Indian custom. Hindu law gives no rights or position to the females.

The whole right is with the men and nothing with the women, but by their affection and serving spirit the women hold the whole respect—the key to all respect. They have the respect of the son and the affection of the husband, and they enjoy like anything.

By the law of the society, externally no rights have been given to the mother, wife or daughter, yet the ladies hold a peculiar and very venerable position in the eyes of society.

Pita raksati kaumare, bhartta raksati yauvane. Here Manu explains that during early age the father will protect the females, during youth the husband will protect them, and in old age the son will protect them. Though externally having no rights, they draw respect from society more than a goddess does.

In a similar way the potency of Krsna, His servitors, hold such a position in relation to Him. They have no external right and do not care for any. They are His, but only through the power of affection and loving service they command the whole. The potency aspect of Krsna does not want any right, force or power, yet they have the subdemost power: the power of affection, the power of love, the power of service, and that is considered to be the highest power ever known to the world. Give up your legal power or any physical power; the *Sakti* (potency) is such that it does not care for that.

The respected Asutosh Mukherji was several times wanted by the government to go to England but his mother did not give permission.

He therefore told them, "My mother does not allow me to go to any foreign country therefore I cannot go."

There are many examples of a mother controlling her son. Taking the feet dust of the mother, the son feels he can do anything and everything. Affection and love have such power, such value!

Therefore Mahaprabhu says, "To give this and that to God is self-deception. Give love. Love of Krsna, *Prema*, is everything; it is all in all. You are spending money and giving your physical energy in so many ways, but love is the real essence of any existence, so offer that to the Lord and through that come to the plane of love that surrounds Him."

God takes the form of Krsna in the plane of love and that is the most fundamental and the most subtle plane behind all this variegated creation. So come to that plane, try to penetrate into that plane where God is Krsna, and where the paraphernalia is Vrndavana. Anyhow try to have admission in that plane and you will find there the happiest form of life.

Mercy is more beautiful than justice. We cannot think of blaming the spirit of justice, but at the same time we cannot deny that there is mercy over justice. But one who can extend mercy over justice must have such power that he is able to give due compensation. The Lord has such power of compensation. Krsna is

such an aspect of the Lord.

He can give mercy through love and affection, and by any means we want to live in that environment. Mahaprabhu came to show that to be the plane for which we should strive. And Bhaktivinoda Thakur said,

"In no time the intelligentsia of the world will come to understand that this is the highest conception of attainment of all humans as well as of everything else in the whole of creation. The intelligentsia cannot be misguided for long by so many other proposals of the highest attainment which are only giving partial achievement. Many things are going on in religion in the name of the highest solution of our life, but what Mahaprabhu has given very soon .will be detected by the intelligentsia of the world, and all will flock to the banner of Sri Chaitanyadeva and will sing the glory of Mahaprabhu and Krsna."

What do you think? Do you think that it is very laudable and tastful?

Our Srila Prabhupad began that Mission and Sripad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj has actually firmly established and propagated it widely. I am growing old and our generation is almost finished. Now you are all to participate and fully develop what they have begun.



Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume Four

Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev Goswami Maharaj

All Glory to Sri Guru and Gauranga

Introduction

Sri Vyasa Puja Address

by Sri Srimad B. R. Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja Nov. 9, 1982

The Lord says that, "My servant's position is also as respectable as Mine. He serves Me and he also is worthy of the same reverence and worship as I am. He is My part and parcel, a member of my family, and my family is the purest of the pure. All of My family are agents of purity and are distributing purity to the world." Purity is not only self-abnegation but the higher purity is in self-surrender. That service is not calculative nor with any motive, but it is automatic, spontaneous service: service of the beautiful, service of love divine. It is not the service of power, but it is service of beauty, love. *Satyam, sivam,*

sundaram. Sundaram is the most original factor ever discovered in this world. So Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and *Srimad Bhagavatam* preached about *sundaram*, which is not mere unassailable eternal existence to be adored, and not mere consciousness of the material substance which may be discovered as a wonderful thing to be adored, but *sundaram* is the fulfillment of the consciousness. The real existence of that highest substance was given exclusively by *Srimad Bhagavatam* and then by Sri Caitanyadeva and His followers. We are worshipers of the beautiful. Reality the beautiful, reality the love, reality the harmony. That is the highest quarter of the existence and we are connected internally with that and so we must aspire after that scientifically. There is a particular method and we are to follow that.

The *sastra*, the scripture, is there and the living *sastra*, the *sadhu*, the saint, is there and under their guidance we can hope to attain the highest fulfillment of life. „Die to live."

So many proposals in the name of helping are only helping us to incur debt in this world. Already one is under the pressure of a heavy burden and again in the name of help he is securing a fresh loan and so more burden is coming on his head. This is the nature of help in this world. No work can be fully pure in this world. It may be said that at least there is good-will but we say that good-will is also impure and filthy. Everything is impure and rubbish here, but with the help

of the scripture and the real agent we are to come to know what is good and what is bad. Then we are to accept the good and eliminate the bad.

Previously Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came distributing this conception and in the modern time our Srila Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, came and almost single-handedly began his fight against the so-called existing principle of help in the environment.

The *Vedas* say, "In the garb of religion so many materialistic things are being delivered. It is a treachery to the ordinary people." We are to know what is pure religion, what is the real recommendation of the *Vedas* which has its conclusion in *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The *Veda* is likened to a wishfulfilling tree, *kalpa-vrksa*: whatever we want it can supply that. And from that has come naturally the ripe product, the ripe fruit of the *Vedas*, and that is *Srimad Bhagavatam*. There is no artificial color there that any scholar can come and thrust his own interpretation into the *Bhagavatam* and say, "This is *Bhagavatam*'s opinion." *Bhagavatam* is not subject to the *Vedas* or the *Upanisads*'

opinions but the *Srimad Bhagavatam* has come automatically from the *Veda* tree.

One who cannot tolerate another's position is a jealous person. This *Bhagavatam* is only meant for those that are free from jealousy so that they can understand that there is only one principal Who is all in all.

He is autocrat and He is all in all. He is our master and He can make or mar. Only those who have no jealousy can come to such a level as to inquire about truth. Whereas the jealous cannot admit that there is God and that the whole creation is designed and destined by Him.

There is the land of the Lord and if we can enter into that plane then we can be really happy by giving and not by exerting. To sacrifice for Him will bring for us both quantity and, especially, quality. If we can have entrance into that plane we shall be able to swim in the pool of nectar. It is very much appreciable.

We can understand that it is very much appreciable, that so many from foreign lands have also come being attracted by the instructions and advice of Mahaprabhu and *Srimad Bhagavatam*. So many young people have been charmed by the beauty of the teachings of Sri Caitanyadeva, *Srimad Bhagavatam* and Their agents. That they would come to join us was already predicted by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura some one hundred years ago and our

Srila Guru Maharaja began the work in a humble way. After that, one of his disciples, Sripad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, went to the West empty-handed but by the grace of Mahaprabhu, Krsna and Nityananda Prabhu he was very much successful to push this high level of advice to the West.

Attracted by his earnest desire to distribute this nectar, the westerners have come in the hundreds to join the *sankirtana* party under the banner of the Gaudiya Math, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura and A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. I am sure that you will be pleased at heart to find them amongst you here. They are taking all sorts of risks in their lives in order to preach these truths to the whole of the world with all the might and resources at their command. There are men of all different types who have joined this movement including bright scholars, doctors and businessmen. They are taking this message to every corner of the earth most skillfully and so we must feel and express our gratitude towards their divine attempt, and to their earnestness to know and distribute this sort of high order of knowledge of relief to the people at large. We appreciate their presence here and their attempt and I feel that you are all of the same opinion as myself that they have encouraged us in a very

extraordinary way to search. Many Indians are encouraged by their presence. They are also very inquisitive, "What is there that so many foreigners of high grades are also coming to appreciate? There must be something to be inquired." In this way so many Indian persons who are holding high positions in the worldly educated society are also coming.

So we give our thanks to those noble persons for their attempts and we pray to our Guru and Vaisnavas that their attempts may be fulfilled by Them.

Pranama-Mantra

to Om Vishnupad Astottara-Sata-Sri Srimad Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

sri-svarupa-raya-rupa-jiva-bhava sambharam

varna-dharma-nirvisesa-sarvaloka-nistaram

sri-sarasvati-priyan ca bhakti-sundarasrayam

sridharam namami bhakti-raksakam jagad-gurum

sindhu-candra-parvatendu saka janma lilanam

suddha-dipta-raga-bhakti-gauravanusilanam

bindu.candra-ratna-soma-saka-locanantaram

sridharam namami bhakti-raksakam jagad-gurum

Chapter 1 The Four Sitzings of Srimad Bhagavatam

Question: In the beginning of *Srimad Bhagavatam* events are described of Suta Goswami speaking at Naimisaranya and this is after Vyasadeva had spoken *Bhagavatam* to Sukadeva. So how is it that Vyasadeva was aware of the events at Naimisaranya?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: So many sittings of *Bhagavatam* took place. First Narada came and gave instruction by way of a ten *sloka* outline. He told Vyasadeva; "Meditate on it and give it out to the public. Elucidate these principles. Elucidate, otherwise what you have given so far will be all fruitless." So Vyasa took only those ten *slokas*, those ten verses. He meditated and wrote the principle *Bhagavatam* in a short way. He gave, "That is revered *brahma* , the highest quarter, the Krsna conception of Godhead, and that *lila* is very sweet. That is nothing of this side in *maya* , but that plane is full of transcendental, sweet pastimes." Vyasadeva managed to call his son, Sukadeva, and in Badarikasrama he taught him: "Although my inclination was towards this non-differentiated *brahman* conception, my father managed to teach me this *lila* of *Bhagavan* Krsna. Today I shall talk about that to you in this great assembly."

So Sukadeva received Srimad Bhagavatam from Vyasadeva.

Previously Narada gave it to Vyasadeva, and Vyasa composed it in elaboration and taught it to Sukadeva: this was the second recitation.

The third was when Sukadeva delivered lectures with his remarks to the great assembly of scholars in Sukartala.

When Sukadeva gave lecture there was one Suta Goswami who was a very sharp hearing man, *srutidhara*. *Srutidhara* is one who having only once heard something keeps it in his memory, and Suta, having those qualities, was present in that meeting. The fourth sitting was in Naimisaranya where the *rsis*,

apprehending the black march, of *Kali-yuga*, commenced and engaged themselves in a one thousand year campaign, *yajna*. Finding Suta Goswami they told, "We have got much leisure in the evening to hear about the Absolute and we heard that you, Suta, were present in that mysterious and famous assembly where Sukadeva gave his lecture about *Bhagavatam* and you memorized it. We request that you deliver by way of lecture to us that *Bhagavatam*." Suta Goswami accepted their proposal and that was the last sitting in the form of regular evening lectures. Sixty thousand or so *rsis*, the scholars and performers of sacrifices, assembled to hear from him. It was after this sitting that Vyasadeva took the whole thing and compiled it in book form and let it loose on the public.

Question: What is that Sukartala that you mentioned just now?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Sukartala is a small district of Uttar Pradesh just opposite Vibhukuti, a little far off from the Ganges, where there was the place of Maharaja Pariksit. When Pariksit was sure to die he came to live in that place near the Ganges, and there the third assembly took place. Perhaps it was from Suka that the name Sukartala has now come, and by that name this place is known to the public.

Question: Was Vyasadeva present at Naimisaranya when Suta spoke?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: No, he was not present in the meeting, but he got information. He was a *yogi*. Vyasadeva was such a *yogi* that he could understand and feel whatever is happening anywhere. In this way the whole battle story in Mahabharata has been described by him.

How it is possible? Not only that but he was a *yogi* of such higher class that he could transfer his *yoga-sakti* to Sanjaya who, inspired by that potency, could also feel that battle. He could observe so many things simultaneously: what one is saying to another, what weapon one is throwing to another, all these things Sanjaya could see simultaneously and he is relating the whole thing to Dhrtarastra by the grace of Vyasadeva. Vyasadeva is able to see many things simultaneously in his *yoga* -developed consciousness.

Once one gentleman told me that Einstein in his last days was asked by his wife, "What invention are you searching now?" He replied: "If I am successful in this campaign of my research then you will be able to see me wherever I am. Wherever I shall be you shall be able to see and feel me. That plane I am going

to try to invent." That was Einstein's last tendency according to one gentleman, though I don't know how far it is true.

Many devotees are also said to realize such a position that from a separate place they can detect when a dog is entering within a particular temple in Vrndavana. He is feeling, "Oh, a dog is entering there." When our plane of consciousness, our conscious seat, is not disturbed by any self-produced thought, when it is clear, then when any wave carrying any news strikes it, it can feel that, "This is happening somewhere else and the wave has come to touch the aerial of my consciousness." When our conscious seat is very clear any wave that arises to touch it, any fact that arises in our plane of thinking, that cannot but be an actual fact. But when self-produced prejudices have covered the conscious seat then we cannot detect such things the plane of our consciousness cannot be read. But when that is cleared, any incident happening anywhere sends some wave to every "receiver" and each can understand, "Oh, such thing is happening!" Useless thoughts and false thoughts do not arise in his mind. Whatever is happening is sending some wave, his mind is so clear that he detects that event. He reads his mind, he feels it and he says, "Oh, this is happening here and that is happening there." It may be considered something like that.

But this is a kind of *siddhi*, mystic power. A true Vaisnava avoids all these things, but automatically it may come to someone and sometimes they may disclose this fact otherwise they avoid all these things. They do not want miracles. They are eager to find out the miracle of the center, the central miracle. They are busy to search for the miracle of miracles, and so these side issues they neglect. They are all-attentive to find out the main problem. Their cent-per-cent energy is engaged for that, concentrated, without caring for these things.

Question: Srila Sridhara Maharaja, when Sukadeva was asked to speak *Srimad Bhagavatam* he was in the presence of his *guru*, Vyasadeva, and *param-guru*, Narada. So how is it that he took the exalted seat of the *vyasasana* in the presence of his *guru* and *param-guru*?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Sukadeva was not asked to speak *Bhagavatam*, only Pariksit Maharaja prayed, "What should be the duty of a man who is surely going to die very soon? How should I utilize my energy that it may help me after death? Certain death is approaching towards me and so how can I utilize my time best?"

So many *rsis*, authorities of different departments, were recommending to him differently, and he was perplexed. He told, "You give some unanimous verdict to me. I have no time so please you give some unanimous instruction." At that time by chance Sukadeva arrived there at the meeting. Sukadeva was a man of fable; many had heard about him, about this peculiar realized soul. "He is a boy of sixteen but he has got no feeling about this world which is so charming to all of us. We are trying our hardest, our best, to get out of the entanglement of this charming world but we find that we fail at every step. However, that boy, Sukadeva, has crossed the line of *maya* and always is in continuous conception of the conscious world. He is quite ignoring these material things and he does not even find the necessity of a cloth around his waist. Even he has got no distinction in his mental eye as to whether one is a woman or a man. He is so highly and firmly established in pure spiritual conception that even the beautiful girls do not feel any necessity to cover the parts their of body."

He was like a fable to the gathered sages. So when Sukadeva appeared they all rose in honor of him. Sukadeva is not caring for anything there and when he entered, all the *rsis* told to Pariksit Maharaja:

"Maharaja, you are very fortunate: this *mahatma*, who we all seek to have *darshan* of, has come. You please ask your question to him, and we are all eager to hear something from his lips." So they all unanimously put Sukadeva in the presidential chair. They all took their seats and Pariksit asked him, "I am just approaching certain death so what is my duty? How should my duty be couched in order that I can have my highest benefit in the least span of time?"

Sukadeva began to answer and everyone there in pin-drop silence began to listen to his words. His words were coming unquestionably as the absolute truth and were unanimously accepted by all. Present in that assembly were all the big scholars who had come to give some consolation to Pariksit Maharaja, "You are such a good Maharaja with good administration. You are unparalleled as well as a lover, respecter and protector of the brahminical *yajna*, faith, etc. Despite all these qualifications you have been thrown a curse from that same side of the *brahmana* section, and that is a very lamentable thing." In this way almost all the leaders of all different schools of philosophy came to give consolation to Maharaja Pariksit. It was in that well-represented assembly that Sukadeva was to speak.

Narada and Vyasadeva knew well that, "What we are trying to inaugurate, which

seemed to be a very narrow and bigoted thing, when Sukadeva will speak this *Bhagavatam* he will give it in a very extensive way and with the widest color."

Narada expressed, "I gave ten poems as ten outlines to Vyasadeva and he elaborately taught that to Sukadeva. Sukadeva has got some extensive credit and honor amongst all the types of scholars. Coming in that broad view and percolated by his *brahma* conception we are eager to see how this elaborated *Srimad Bhagavatam* shall be delivered to this world retaining its transcendental characteristic. In order to do away with any mundane misconception it must pass through Sukadeva otherwise people may think this to be mundane. He has got the broadest conception of view and his qualification is admitted from all sides."

Narada and Vyasadeva were present and eagerly waiting. Happily they tasted how through *brahma-jnana*, through the widest touch, this Krsna- *lila*, which seems to be of very limited and narrow things passes through to be widely accepted.

All these gentlemen for seven clays attended this meeting and they all listened with such eagerness.

Sukadeva told, "From my father, from my dear affectionate father I have learned these things." And giving warning to the audience he told, "You all know that I have no bigoted conception about religion.

The broadest conception of religion I possess and I am famous for that. I have got contact with the *brahma*. *Brahma* means the biggest, the greatest plane: the higher, widest plane. I am already settled in that consciousness so what I say don't take it as mundane happenings of this limited world, but it is coming from the other side. That is beyond *Brahmaloka* and has attracted me. I have got no charm for anything of this mundane world. I am well established in the transcendental world.

I shall give delivery to you all of what attracted me and what I have noted and studied, and that is fully transcendental. With this warning I give delivery of all these things, of Krsna- *lila*. You should take it that Krsna's pastimes are broader, wider, higher and deeper things in the transcendental world. You must take it like that." Now and again giving this warning Sukadeva is delivering the whole thing, and Narada and Vyasadeva are reflecting: "Yes, we are successful!"

In his introduction to *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Vyasadeva has written there, "Originally this Srimad Bhagavatam is a very good thing, but still its beauty is enhanced by the commentary that has come from the mouth of Sukadeva. The *Bhagavat* knowledge modified and ornamented by the knowledge of Sukadeva has got a wider view and that universal truth will be easy for all sections of the religious school to accept."

So, knowingly it was that the *guru* and *param-guru* of Sukadeva were present there. They knew the future and could understand that this recitation would occur, and also out of sympathy for Maharaja Pariksit they came. They did not come by chance.

Chapter 2 The Free Flow of The Absolute

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: I must feel that I am unsatisfied with the environment of this world: life, death, torture and all these things, *janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi*. If one is really a sincere seeker of a happy life, then he must try with his utmost endeavor to get freed from this environment and to find another place: home. Back to God, back to home. And we are told from ancient times that we have got a home and that that home is under the cooling shade of the holy feet of our Lord.

Practically we must take into our program and in our daily schedule, wholesale, how to get out of this nasty colony and go back to our home, sweet home. And why is it sweet? We are to discuss that with all our intellect. Although intellect is not qualified to know about that, but still in the negative way also we can calculate that the positive is there. In that plane they are eager to take us in. They are honest. So we want to live in that plane as our country because they are honest.

There it is infinite and no population will be suppressed there.

This plane here is not worth living in, so we must search for a place worth living in, and in the quest for that land we may pass lives after lives. In this search there is no loss because where we are at present is undesirable, and if we are sincere in this feeling then to search for what is desirable is not madness. We may pass lives after lives in search of a sweet home and there will be no waste of energy in that endeavor. This is not unreasonable, rather we find that this is finely reasonable.

Sastra and *yukti*. First is the *sastra*, revealed scriptures, the positive contribution. Then next, and subservient, is reason, *yukti*. Logic is subservient, and the positive extension from the world of truth is the real thing. That is the main thing and logic will be subservient: by logic of this domain we cannot know anything about the transcendental realm.

Logic may be applied here but the logic of chemistry may not work in the logic of theology wholesale. Everything has got its own logic. The transcendental world has got its own logic but this mundane logic may help us partially, as an analogy.

To understand about the five planes of knowledge is infinite. Every unit is infinite. Infinite minus infinite, remaining is infinite! So the infinite world is such that we are always in a relative position in the infinite. The infinite can never be finished. Everywhere there is center, nowhere there is circumference.

Mahaprabhu Himself says, "I am hankering for the truth, I have not got it." Truth is so wonderful, so wonderful an attainment that Mahaprabhu, the highest, the Infinite Personified, He comes to teach us and He also says that, "I am only near the verge." Similarly Newton told, "I am collecting a few pebbles from the sea-shore, the ocean of knowledge is extended before my eyes. I know more than you, because you, you fool, you say that I have finished knowledge, but it can never be finished, only it can be touched, touched in a point."

Newton told like that about the scientific knowledge of this world. So, what about the infinite knowledge, how it should be! With what aspiration and patience and hope we are to approach that world! If Newton in the science of this mundane world can say like that, then we who always speak of the higher infinite, what audacity do we have to think, that by impatiently passing a few minutes or a few days or by stepping forward a few yards, we shall be able to know the Infinite!

We are traitors to ourselves, we are not approaching the Infinite! We should not have so much courage, and so much sincere hope for the best to get it, wanting only an easy result. We must be prepared. We are out for the Infinite, and we really must want to utilize ourselves and not for *our* satisfaction. "Die to live," Hegel told. "Ideal reality" is the name of his philosophy. Really, the ideal is real: ideal realism.

Everything begins with idea and then it takes shape, it materializes.

"He is for Himself", Hegel told, "Everything is for Himself, and we are for Him."

We are for Him, we are to search for our master and not for a servant, not an order-supplier or a canvasser, but master. And the master says, "Prepare yourself for My service to satisfy Me; for My satisfaction come to be available to the complete degree. Now that you have come within, you say that you will be allowed to steal something and go away? No! All rights reserved. All rights reserved: it is not very easy to have rights, to establish rights here in My plane. I am such a master? I am an autocrat. Because I am omniscient, I am an autocrat.

You are vulnerable and I am the guardian, the strong guardian.

"Try to put trust in My universal guardianship first. By understanding that I am your guardian you will find peace within you. I am your well-wisher.

bhoktaram yajna-tapasam, sarva-loka-mahesvaram

suhrdam sarva-bhutanam, jnatva mam santim rcchati

(Bhagavad-gita, 5.29)

"I am the center of distribution of goodness, I am over all: if you can think in such a way, then you can find peace within you wherever you may be. I am everything but I am your real well-wisher at the same time. I have no apprehension from anyone, whoever he is and whatever position he may hold."

Question: How are we to understand that Krsna is an autocrat, despot, liar, *and* our well-wisher?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: He is an autocrat because law comes from Him. The autocrat is above law, law emanates from Him. When there are many there is law. When there is only one, there is no necessity of law. Are you satisfied?

Question: Yes. Then, He is a despot?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Despot, but Absolute Good! If there would be any check in His despotism then the world would be the loser, the environment

would be the loser. Goodness must have its full-fledged flow. Is it bad? Can there be any objection to that?

Goodness must have its freedom to flow anywhere and everywhere.

"The Absolute Good", we say, then what can we lose by giving Him autocracy? Should the autocracy be with the ignorant and the fools?

Should the fools and the mischievous have autocracy? No! The Absolute Good must have full autocracy. Not that law will go to bind His hand for then we will be the loser.

Question: Then, He is a liar?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, liar, to entice us because we cannot understand the whole truth, the Absolute Truth. So in order to entice us gradually, to draw us forward, He has become a liar. If He is all-goodness then everything emanating from Him cannot but be good.

Defect can only be found in other quarters. He is the owner.

Everything belongs to Him. We are encroachers. He is not an encroacher although He shows sometimes in that way. But that is His play, *lila*, and everything belongs to Him. His lying is good. Whatever He says, is so: "Let there be water" and there was water, "Let there be light" and there was light With such potential power at the center, can any lying be there?

Question: If He is all these things; despot, autocrat and liar, then how can we understand that He is also our ever well-wisher?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Why in this world has He given you freedom? Because free choice is necessary for feeling happiness, otherwise He is one whole, He is everywhere, with no separate individual position. If you are to conceive any separate interest, separate individuality, then freedom is indispensable. Free cooperation can give you real happiness, but if freedom is snatched from you, you become a stone. Is that desirable? Is there any dearth of stones? Then?

Endowed with freedom, free choice to choose the good and dismiss the bad. Then should it be thought that everyone will be bad, so that then no free choice

will be given to anything? Is this desirable?

So realize all these things within yourself and try to adjust with the center. It is not that we are all right and we must trace some defect in Him: we are not to foster that attitude. But *He* is all-good and the defect is in us. By conferring free choice within us He has not done wrong. We are to find that out. If there is not freedom of conception in us we cannot have the position of enjoying happiness.

Question: Then, " *aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam ...*"

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: From so low you are going to so high!

Aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam . What do you want to say there?

Question: Is it just a manufacturing of our own mentality? Is it just our own conception that He has abandoned me? Or that He is here or He is not here? Or that He is with me or He is not with me?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: He is always with you, but still He is not with you at all. He is always being in the background and He is not in the positive foreground. I cannot find Him because finding is of infinite character. He is infinite and my position is very meager, so I can never be satisfied.

He is with me in the background as the infinite character, but I only have my meager conception therefore just how much can I get of Him? But I know the fact that He is bigger and bigger whereas I am finer and finer. So satisfaction and dissatisfaction are both contained: it cannot but be. The infinite character is in the background and the finite character is before me. Because I have got small existence, how can I take part of Him? What I can have in my possession of Him, that is very meager: the background says " This is nothing," So many others are also there. So many are holding higher positions, and that is also a relativity: relative life. Parts are always within the laws of relativity, including ourselves. In this material plane we are unsatisfied. If I have got one state then I want to conquer the whole world, then I want to conquer the whole solar system: there is no end. Even in connection with the physical infinite we aspire to hold a higher position, and in the spiritual plane it is also such.

There is also the realm of the type of satisfaction of losing one's personality and entering into deep, sound sleep. That is found in Brahmaloka and Viraja. On one side of that we get good, and on the other we get bad. The property for

exploitation is infinite, and the realm of service to the master, competition, that is also infinite.- To have an individual position necessarily means to be in the environment of infinite, Good or bad. Healthy or diseased.

Question: What is Brahmaloka?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Brahmaloka is where we lose our material ego, material individuality, but do not get our spiritual individuality.

Brahmaloka is the marginal position. It is no-man's-land. The other side is in touch with the other realm and this side is in touch with this plane: something like that. It is the border, the margin between the two. On one side is consciousness, and on the other side is matter. One side is light and one side is darkness. Just as in the evening, light and darkness are combined.

Question: Are Sankara and Buddha citizens of no-man's-land?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. One is on this side, nearing the land of exploitation and the other is nearing the land of dedication: Brahmaloka is a little higher than Viraja. Viraja is the watery characteristic of *prakṛti*. Whereas Brahmaloka is light, *purusa* .

Tat lingam bhagavan sambhur . In the *Brahma-samhita* it is told that a ray of light is coming to this watery substance. This watery substance is compared to *prakṛti* . *Prakṛti* means this external potency, the potency on which the misconception arises and from which it is born.

There some movement is created and the ray within is sown amongst the misconceived things without. There is a free combination and this world emerges from that common material, *mahat-tattva* .

mama yonir mahad-brahma, tasmin garbham dadhamyaham

sambhavah sarva-bhutanam, tato bhavati bharata

(Bhagavad-gita, 14.3)

"O Bharata, material nature, known as *pradhana* , is the womb into which I cast the seed (in the form of the individual soul which is born of the marginal potency) From that place, all beings headed by Lord Brahma are generated."

Aham bija-pradah pita: "I am the seed-bestowing father." *Tat lingam bhagavan sambhur*: "And Sambhu is My sense that gives birth." That may be taken as Sambhu, Siva; the part of the Supreme that is coming within this *prakrti* and moving it, producing this world in the negative side.

The world of luster must be scrutinized and analyzed and we shall find that so many units are there. So many souls are there but all are serving units, and I also can be enlisted and allowed to enter there amongst them. In Vaikuntha, the life of the plane of dedication, we can be newborn there and have our position.

Question: Is that the fourth plane and fifth plane of attaining knowledge?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It is the third plane. The third plane Sankara recommended as the marginal position, and the fourth plane Sri Ramanujacarya recommended as the power-controlling, calculative service of the Lord in awe and reverence. Then the next higher and most all-embracing solid circle is Goloka. Goloka means something like a football: a four right-angled solid circle where there is no crookedness. There we find that, and that is the deepest plane spreading all through, all pervading. That is Goloka. It is the all-pervading, all-embracing, and finest plane. That is the plane of love and beauty and automatic service. Automatic, not calculative. That is the plane of Krsna: the most universal, the most capturing, the widest and the finest. Beauty is reigning there; the queen of love is managing there by Her potency, The potency there is *ahaituki-apratihata*, causeless and continuous.

There is *Svayam-Bhagavan* and *Mahabhava*. the highest conception of negative and the highest conception of positive, combined, of the highest quality. And that is love and beauty: it is their reign, their kingdom. It has been found out, and it is given to us by *Bhagavatam* and Mahaprabhu, that beauty is controlling. Love is controlling: that land is such. If we are tempted by that, we are to try for that. Only the attraction which originates from that plane can take us there. Agents from that plane come here, float on the surface, and give us an injection so that we can gradually move towards that direction. They give the injection of prospect. Such prospects there are! Will you come to take a certificate to enter into that plane?

It is from that plane, really from that plane, that the sound of the holy name emanates. By following that sound we can be led there but if an imitation sound comes it may take us to some other plane and finish there. The sound, has got so

much depth. Like the homeopathic pill, apparently so many globules are one and the same but the potency within is all-important.

Vaikuntha nam grahana: not mundane sound, but we are to differentiate according to the depth of meaning in the sound. The word contains what depth of potency within? What depth of good will and knowledge? That very fine thing within the sound will exert itself ultimately and not the sound vibration only. The sound containing the *bhava*, the meaning, that is everything and that is very important.

Question: The ninth offense against the holy name is to preach the glories of the holy name to the faithless. Is it an offense to give the holy name or a conception of the spiritual realm to the Sankarites, the Saivites and other impersonalists?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: The field must be favorable for the seed to grow, otherwise good seed cast onto the stone will be useless.

Sraddha, the *sisya*, and the *guru*, each must be proper and those symptoms have been given in the scripture. The healthy *sisya* attitude (disciple attitude) must be there and also the field must be cultivated in a certain way. The soil and the seed, they both must be proper, then the crops will grow.

Question: You mentioned once that the name can become counterfeit like shooting a gun using a blank bullet. Could you explain that please?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: If there is only sound it is something like many globules of homeopathic pills without any medicine: mere globes. Mere sound, but nothing good within, will do the work of globules of sugar only, but not of medicine. Do you follow? The globules made of sugar, but having no medicine within, will have what effect? If we take that sort of globule of homeopathy without any medicine within, what will be the result? No effect. Similarly the mere letters of the name and not the name itself, will not be able to produce anything good. *Namaksara bahiraya bate* is the cover-sound; the sound without any real meaning within it. And because the real purpose and the real good is not behind the sound it will produce false effect.

You are sending letters with inquiry. Are all the points finished?

Question: No! In the last letter I wrote there is a question about something I think Narada Muni said. How can we understand that the demon can cultivate

more intensity than the devotee'?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It is easy to get more intensity in that section of lower purpose. That may be easily granted, but that intensity is of less quality. That takes them only to the verge, that Brahmaloka circle.

Rupa Goswami has harmonized it in his explanation.

yad arinam priyanam ca, prapyam ekam ivoditam

tad brahma-krsnayoraikyat, kiranarkopama-jusoh

(Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, 1.2.278)

Just as there is the sun and its ray, there is similarly Krsna and Brahmaloka, the ray of His domain. The *asuras*, they get their final shelter in Brahmaloka, *kirana* ; the world of luster. And the devotees, they enter into the transcendental cosmic area according to their choice and their innate quality. The gradation is there in His family and in His paraphernalia.

A maidservant enters a room by a door and a newlywed wife also enters by the same door but each occupies a far, far different position from the other.

kamad dvesad bhayat snehad yatha bhaktyasvare manah

avesya tad-agham hitva bahavas tad-gatim gatah

(Bhagavatam, 7.1.30)

It is easy to capture more intensity in the lower quality, but in the higher order it is difficult to attain. So, easily the lower section get their sanction but it is hard for the devotee who wants to enter into the harem of Krsna amongst His internal servants: that is a little difficult.

It is common sense.

The oneness of Krsna is not all one and the same. One is on the outskirts of the compound and another is at the very center of the compound. Difference is there: this is to be discriminated and Rupa Goswami has given the solution. The solution of originality of harmony has been given by Rupa Goswami in *Laghu-*

bhagavatamrta which is most critical. There it is given: *sevonmukhe hi jihvadau*, to take the name or do any service must have that one quality present to be named as devotion: the serving tendency must be there, otherwise the external show is not the real thing. "I am taking the name, a hundred crores of times" or all these things, it is all lip-deep and that won't fetch any higher value. But the depth must be considered. The intensity must be reckoned and that will lead us to get Krsna.

According to that reckoning we may get to the outskirts of Krsna's domain or we may be allowed to enter into His confidential realm; this sort of consideration is there. So this is the way to harmonize things, good and bad. It is not one and the same, because it is, after all, a discriminating, differentiated plane, not a static hazy one. Krsna means differentiation. When Krsna is at the side of Srimati Radharani He is fullest, and when Krsna is at the side of other *gopis* He is one degree less.

In so many ways His attitude or His presence is measured by the devotees. How much intensity? How much love? There is also differentiation there in Vrndavana: in many, ways there is always differentiated character.

Question: Sometimes we feel the intensity very strongly...

Srila Sridhara Maharaj: What to speak of us, we are to understand these principles first. To attain to that position is imaginary and a story-like thing; like a fable. First let us enter into the area.

But we need not be discouraged; grace is there! Grace has got no limit. There is no fear of being bankrupt about Krsna. There is no question of Krsna being bankrupt there! Infinite! But to our faith it is difficult, very difficult, to get that, but His grace is there. Grace is not conditional for it may come to any place. No, one is sufficiently low that he cannot get His grace. Grace is free, it can embrace anyone. The most fallen may be graced and one who is puffed up with his own qualities may be neglected.

prema marta nityananda krpa-avatara

uttama, adhama, kichu ne kare vicara

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Adi 5.208)

Sri Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami, the author of *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*, says, "Nityananda Prabhu is mad in His distribution. in His magnanimity. He does not stoop so low as to consider that, 'This one is qualified, this one is not.' Sometimes the flood comes and inundates everyone: His movement is such." Sri Kaviraja Goswami continues, 'Only that chance captured me. It was not by any consideration of my capacity or my fitness, but by some causeless inundation the flood came and captured me: the flood from Nityananda Prabhu, by His grace. This is my position. Shamelessly I am giving an announcement that I have got a drop of the grace of Nityananda otherwise I would be faithless. Faithless! I have got Rupa, I have got Sanatana: that is to say that I have got appreciation for these stalwarts, these devotees. That I have got this and that, I cannot deny, and what I am giving to you in this scripture is not possible without grace. It is high. I can never deny that this; that what I am giving here is high. What is given through me in this book, *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* ; is of the highest order. If I don't say so then I would be faithless and unthankful. But it is not mine, it is extended to me by the higher authorities by their causeless mercy. It has captured me. I have been selected as their instrument, as their means. I feel that what is there is of a very pure and high type but I cannot claim it to be my own, it is someone else's property. It is resting in me, it can be withdrawn at any moment. It is so uncertain, but still it is, I can't deny, and it is the most beautiful thing, that also I can't deny."

Grace means independence. Grace means separate independence of the giver.

Chapter 3 Truth by Installments

Question: How do we reconcile the fact that in some *sastras* it says that Siva is supreme?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Siva is a type who is inquiring after something but Visnu is a type who has everything within. Siva is searching.

The *sastra* says differently for different sections according to their capability of catching the truth. In the primary literature it may be said that the sun is fixed and the planets are moving but in higher astronomy it may be said that the sun is also moving, with all the planets also moving around it. But to the children the whole truth may not be said. The truth is given partially, and by installments. *Sastra* has adopted this policy of giving things by installments in order that it will be acceptable accordingly by the different sections. Then when they will

reach to that standard the *sastra* will come to say, "This is not the end, my boy. You will have to go further." This policy has been adopted in the *sastra* by the givers of the revealed truth.

loke vyavayamisa-madya-seva

nitya hi jantor na hi tatra codana

vyavasthitis tesu vivaha-yajna

sura-grahair asu nivrttir ista

(Bhagavatam, 11.5.11)

Partially, by installments, the truth is being distributed to them because they cannot accept the whole truth. They cannot understand the whole truth at once. The scripture advises that, "If you want to be united with the ladies, then marry and in that way go on. If you want to take fish and meat, then you dedicate it to a certain deity and in society you take it partially under the direction of a particular company who will make such arrangements. Your merit will be given to that animal whose body you are taking, but go on in contact with that company and take meat." The advice is meant like that.

Similarly: "If you want to take wine, then first offer it to such-and-such god and then take it." But it is not that, "You do not want it but I am forcing it on you." Rather, "Because you cannot imagine your existence without the help of these things I am giving some provision to you under some restriction. Then again I will come and take you up to the further, higher advice: 'Now take this!'"

Then, presently the *sastra* tells, "Already for fifty years you have been trying to enjoy, now come to the life of renunciation: give up everything. Come and devote yourself exclusively in the search for the future life in a scientific way." In this way the progressive steps are given. Human life itself is gradually progressing: first there is student life, then household life, to work, then the third life is for retirement, and the fourth life, *sannyasa*, is for giving up everything and going on independently. In this way there is classification in the human life.

In the section of the Puranas known as the *Saiva* Puranas it tells that Siva is supreme. The Puranas are divided into three. In all there are eighteen in number: six are *sattvik*, the upper division, six are *rajasik*, the middle division; and six are

tamasik, the lower division. This classification is mentioned in the Puranas. In *Gaudiya-kanthahar* you will find mention of all these things: the classification of the Puranas.

Some are meant for the lower, some for the middle and some for the higher sections of society. For this purpose the Puranas are divided into three groups of six. *Vedārtha-purāṇat*: the Puranas are supplementary to the meanings of the Vedas, the higher revelation scriptures. The Puranas are called Puranas because they make the meaning of the *Veda* full. According to the degree and capacity of the people, *śāstra* has approached in different levels.

Question: So can we say that the Puranas are giving a lower conception?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Some Puranas are giving the lower or minimum conception: "The minimum is that you do this." The Manu-samhita says: "I am giving a list of fishes by name: 'Eat these particular types of fish but do not take these other species.' That does not mean that without fish if you go on then that will be bad. But because you cannot do without taking these things, because it is inconceivable for you to go on with your life without taking these things, I am giving the advice, 'That type will create some disease, that one will create some mischief, that one even more mischief, therefore the less mischievous things you should take.' But my underlying meaning is that I shall call you after some time, 'Go up!'. That indomitable spirit is within you to get all these lower things, so I must at least advise you to do something. (*Pravṛtti-esa bhūtanam*)"

The Upanisads make the analogy of riding on a horse. The horse is running towards a particular direction and, although the rider pulls on the reins, the horse won't come back. Then he is allowed to go at his free-will for some time and then again the rider draws on the reins. In this way, after some attempts, the horse will come back on course: it can be turned. In the Upanisads it is mentioned that our ego is running like the horse. This body is a chariot and the senses are like horses taking me towards their particular wrong directions, But I shall try to take them, to alter their course to some other direction. They may not care for me so what to do but let them go a little ahead for some time.

But I shall try again and again and eventually I shall see that the horse is responding to my command.

The indomitable tendency towards this exploitation is here (*pravṛttir-esa*

bhutanam). But what to do except give it all up and go to the other side beyond indifference and abnegation (*nivrttis tu mahaphala*) . And that is proper adjustment.

yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra, loko 'yam karma-bandhanah

tad-artham karma kaunteya, mukta-sangah samacara

(Bhagavad-gita, 3.9)

Everything should be connected with the center otherwise you will be responsible for exploitation and thereby get reaction. But if you can connect everything according to the scripture, according to the rules to deal with the center, then you are relieved from your local responsibility, You must work in the central intensity and the center will make adjustment.

Question: Is the *varnasrama-dharma* system given in the Puranas?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, it is in the Puranas.

Question: Is it given in the *sattvik sastra* but not in the *rajasik* or *tamasik sastra* ?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: In each of the *tamasik*, *rajasik* and *sattvik* scriptures *varnasrama-dharma* is both included and classified. But *sattvik* is also not *nirguna*, but the *nirguna* campaign may be begun from any post of *varnasrama*. A *sudra* may come to have direct connection with the center whereas a *brahmana* may not accept and he will have to turn again to go downwards. It is revolving like this, like a wheel going up, and coming down. A *brahmana* is not sure to be a *brahmana* always. After this birth he may go down again to the lowest position and then again come back up (*abrahma bhuvanal lokah, punar avartino*). This *sattva-guna*, *rajo-guna* and *tamo-guna* are interchanging their positions always, but *nirguna* has permanent value. That *nirguna* life may be begun from any position. A *sudra* may begin that *nirguna* life, a *brahmana* also may: anyone may do or anyone may not do. Those who do not will revolve in this *guna-maya*, going up and coming down. Exploiting means getting loan and becoming heavy. That heaviness takes him down. Then, in the downward position he is being exploited and thereby the loan becomes cleared: he is made light and goes up. In this way he is coming and going: exploiting and being exploited. It is a vicious circle. To get *nirguna* is to get out of that circle.

tasyaiva hetoh prayateta kovido

na labhyate yad bhramatam upary adhah

tal labhyate duhkavad anyatah sukham

kalena sarvatra gabhira-ramhase

(Bhagavatam, 1.5.18)

"Persons who are actually intelligent and philosophically inclined should endeavor only for that purposeful end which is not obtainable even by wandering from the topmost planes down to the lowest planet.

As far as happiness derived from sense enjoyment is concerned, it can be obtained automatically in course of time, just as in course of time we obtain miseries even though we do not desire them."

By the great force of time and space it is revolving. But only those who can acquire some *sukrti*, who have some tendency to serve in connection with the *nirguna* plane, they will survive. Gradually they will make themselves free from this vicious circle: free from that force of going up and down, up and down.

Question: I understand that in the *varnasrama-dharma* system even a *sudra* must follow regulative principles.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: By that he may attain the *rajasik* plane and gradually to the *sattvik* plane: But this is all *guna-maya*. *Nirguna* is something else.

A *brahmana* may have some facility, but in spite of that he may not connect with *nirguna*. He may go to Brahmaloka but he will remain within this material plane. The connection with *nirguna* is independent of this *varnasrama*. There is *asura-varnasrama* and *daiva-varnasrama*; the classification of two *varnasramas*. Where there is recognition of the highest, *nirguna*, that is called *daiva-varnasrama*. And where there is consideration of the flesh in this *guna-mayi-jagat*: the good and bad within the misconceived realm, the standard of misconception, that is called *asura-varnasrama* .

From the standpoint of the absolute consideration when *varnasrama* is connected with *nirguna* , then that is really helpful, otherwise not.

Question: Can we say that there is some facility for eating meat within the *varnasrama* system?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, but that is *saguna*. *Saguna*, it is within the mundane nature. We take the flesh of the beast but some *mantram*, some regulation, some deity, some particular company, association; all these things are involved. And what will that do? We are using his flesh, and the soul of the beast will get something from our merit. So, it is not proper, but it is not such a brutal violence. It is modified violence and the soul of the animal will be compensated in the next life according to the method in which he is killed. But those who are taking advantage of his flesh are not devotees. They are ordinary men and they will get ordinary *sattvik* or *rajasik* result. There is no touch of devotion proper there. No touch of *nirguna*.

But in the Vaisnava section, according to *sastra* the vegetables can be offered to Narayana. Those vegetables offered to Narayana will be elevated automatically. And those who are giving, who are offering, and, for the service are taking that *prasadam*, for them there is no harm. They will be elevated by taking that *prasadam*. So in the Vaisnava conception both the eater and the eaten, all are going up because they are coming in connection with that highest good-will.

But that is not the case with other 'goodness'.

'dvaite' bhadrabhadra-jnana, saba - manodharma'

'ei bhala, ei manda', - ei sabe 'bhrama'

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Antya 4.176)

In the world of misconception the plane is misconceived, so what real benefit, good or bad, may be there? Ultimately all is false, as in a dream. So whether it is a good dream or a bad dream, there is not much difference there. In such a plane of unreality, to consider some thing to be good and another thing to be bad is all based on falsity, misconception.

Question: If an animal is killed must that soul come again in the same species?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Not always. The results of his previous actions will come forward. After the marriage of Devaki to Vasudeva, Kamsa, as a charioteer, is taking Devaki and Vasudeva to her father-in-law's house. At that

time some sound came from the sky saying, "You are relishing this marriage, but the eighth son of your sister will be your killer!" And suddenly Kamsa jumped and took his sister by the hair and was about to behead her. Then Vasudeva came to oppose him; "What are you doing? You are a hero, and you are killing your sister? Being afraid for your life you stoop so low!" In this way on that occasion there was some talk and in course of that Vasudeva said,

"Before one dies, birth begins."

Birth, rebirth, begins before one's death. Why! How is it possible? The next birth begins before his death because the past *karmas* come to take their satisfaction. Each one comes with its demands. All tendencies come to get the next chance, the first chance. It is automatically decided in some computer-like way, and when the body is left the subtle body captures the soul and takes it. He may go anywhere and everywhere as the consequence of his previous actions.

In the shape of idea the consequences come to take possession.

So after a human birth one may go down to be a tree. Even by living in accordance with the *varnasrama-dharma* system we also find that some *deva* is coming to be a stone or a tree in his next life; all these things are happening. So when one dies it may be possible, but it is not sure, that a *brahmana* will again be a *brahmana* in his next birth.

If he has done some previous bad action then that may take him to the worst position, whereas a *candala* who is finishing his lowest form of life may come to be a *brahmana* at once. According to *karma*, and the intensity and priority of the *karma*, the results have their effects.

Chapter 4 With Sincerity to Safety

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Pure means God-interested. In one's innate nature God's interest is present. Only God's interest is the innate tendency and when that is uncovered we can see everything as it is.

There everything is doing the service of the Absolute and everything is all right. The only anomaly arises when we want to see the Absolute as my servant or I want to non-cooperate with Him (*bhuki-mukti-sprha*). These are two kinds of misconceptions but really everything is meant for serving Him and I am also a

servant included within that jurisdiction. I am a servant. My duty is to use myself cent-per-cent to serve Him. Service is the truth. Service, not of the nation or society or land or country, but service of the Absolute: that is truth. Only misconception has come to deviate us from that vision and so cause our suffering. It is something like disease. We are attacked by a disease of exploiting tendency or renouncing tendency. The duty of every *jiva* soul is to be an inseparable organic unit to serve and to work for the interest of the organic whole. That is the basic idea.

Question: Does each unit have an eternal relationship with the whole which is not the same as that of another unit?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: They are individuals, but in consonance.

There is some sympathetic relation between them. There are groups also according to the nature of service: *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* and *madhurya*. There are so many groups and they are sympathetic.

Sometimes there also may be fighting with the opposition, but that is also service!

Question: Can you explain further of what you mentioned recently, that in the devotee's quest to become pure he must go through numerous situations where he is accepting something higher and rejecting something lower: eliminating the lower conception and accepting the higher conception?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Those are different stages of that misunderstanding, different strata. *Sadhana* means progress which means eliminating something and inviting something higher. In this way the process is there and that may be quick in a certain case and slow in another. It may be slow or rapid but we are to pass through different stages according to the intensity of illusion.

Question: What is the determining factor as to whether we pass through such a stage slowly or quickly?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: That will depend upon the *sukrti* and the *sat-sanga*. There will be some conscious help and some previous underground help. *Ajnata-sukrti* is when unconsciously unknown benefit has come to me. Whereas *jnata-sukrti* is when consciously some benefit comes through the association of the *sadhu*, the saint.

And that *sadhu* also may be of different types.

Question: I don't understand. The *sadhu* may be of different types?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: There are different types of *sadhus*. We have freedom of cooperation and association with a particular section and the outcome of that depends also on the quality of whom we associate with.

Question: So spiritual life is one where we are accepting a new concept and eliminating old concepts?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: There is classification of misconception: *Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah* and *Satya*. There is so much gradation within the plane of misconception. And within that there are so many subdivisions such as insects, trees, animals, etc. But at the same time we shall think that a tree might have advanced in the *nirguna* whereas a man might not. Misconception may be so hopelessly peculiar in a man that it will take time to cure him. At the same time, the mental system of a tree or an animal may be more advanced towards service, though its present situation is very lamentable.

Question: Does the acceptance and elimination of concepts include *sadhu-sanga*, that we accept and eliminate there also?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. In *sadhu-sanga* there are so many considerations: the type of *sadhu*, the cooperating tendency, also the backing of previous *sukrti*. There are many things to be taken into calculation.

adhistanam tatha karta, karanam ca prthag-vidham

vividhas ca prthak cesta, daivam caivatra pancamam

(Bhagavad-gita, 18.14)

With the help of these five factors, all actions are effected: "The body, ego (in the form of the knot of spirit and matter), the separate senses, the different endeavors, and destiny, or the intervention of the Supreme Universal Controller."

It is not that just one incident is the cause but there are so many circumstantial things coming together that cause a particular event.

Any event is the combination of many things: his free-will, his previous background, his present association, his nature: all these things have got their contribution for his progress. Circumstance can contribute much. It is not limited only to the free-will of the man who wants progress.

Question: What about *Vaisnava aparadha*, offenses to the devotees ?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: If that is underground that will vehemently oppose his progress. In a particular circumstance many things may be more or less important that will arrest or help his progress.

Question: One cannot say which factor is more important because each situation is different?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It is generally told that when one has come to such a position that he accepts the Vaisnava as all in all then the ordinary duties to the worldly environment will lose their importance. At that stage the importance should be given to the finer circumstances relating to where I am really wanting to enter into. The sympathy or apathy of those who are in power will have much effect, whereas the sympathy and apathy of those in a lower position will be of less-value. That is natural common sense. I may want progress, but if the higher officials are non-sympathetic then that will be a great hindrance. But if the lower people who are under me have some complaint then that will not matter much. So Vaisnava and Visnu will be given the highest consideration and I must take care not to commit any offense and not to incur any displeasure from Them. Our extra attention should be given to that.

Question: Is the guru-disciple relationship above this acceptance and elimination process?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Sometimes we may see this happen but that is the most unfortunate thing ever one may have to forego. If any wrong is found in whom I want to depend foremost then that will be a great misfortune and setback. The greatest setback is to eliminate guru. But to be sympathetic with our gurudeva and after his departure if we take help of the closer association then that is not to dismiss the guru. Rather, that will help us to serve more our gurudeva. After the departure of guru I shall try to get the help of those who are of higher type. Therefore if I could get help from any of his friends, then of course that is not bad. Rather that is good because I am getting impetus to

make my progress more quickly, and my progress will not be checked for want of any favorable advice about the ways and means.

The danger arises when guru is alive and for any reason I am to leave him. That is of course a very dangerous thing and there also we find the relative consideration and the absolute consideration going side by side. When they are going side by side, the absolute consideration must get the upper hand. We may be misguided and so it is easy to change the guru from non- *Vaisnava* to *Vaisnava*, from *saguna* to *nirguna* . But in the *nirguna-viveka*, in the same plane, if we are to change guru during the lifetime of guru then that we must consider as a grave and serious thing. Sometimes such a disaster may fall on some disciple.

There are also the so-called *Vaisnava* gurus who have left the proper line but who profess themselves to be in the *Vaisnava* school. They came perhaps with some sincerity but became influenced by bad association and so they changed their faith. These are very complicated things, but differentiation is possible. And when it is clearly differentiated that such an unfortunate situation exists, then the disciple must take certain steps. It is possible also that, broken-hearted, one may take the risk of giving up the possibility of making any progress in this life. Without progress, broken-hearted, he lives thinking, "My choice has been wrong and my attempt in this life has been thwarted and that is my misfortune. However, at least seeking the help of the Supreme Lord, I shall have some hope that in my next life I may find that real thread of progress."

But there may be someone of strong understanding who can change his path from here to there. Especially this may be so if any incidental ignorance had covered him for the time being and that has now passed away so that he can see clearly what is what. He may consider, "I have purchased a through-ticket but when making some progress I have come to understand that there are some hindrances on the line."

Therefore, from this juncture I can accept another train on another line in order to go where there is no danger." If it becomes clear that ahead there is some danger, then although a ticket was purchased to go through on this line the necessity then arises to get down from the train at a junction and accept another line to reach the goal. It is quite possible this consideration may arise if things occur in such way.

Alternatively, someone may consider that he has purchased a ticket and therefore he must go on along that line. But the absolute consideration is that, "I want to go to that destination, and I am going for that purpose. So, if on the way I am to find that there is some difficulty then I am to change my course." This is common sense.

partha naiveha namutra, vinasas tasya vidyate

na hi kalyana-krt kascid, durgatim tata gacchati

(Bhagavad-gita, 6.40)

For one who is sincere in his activity he need not be afraid of anything because the Lord is the guide. Through gurudeva also the inner guide is He. By His direction all these things are being done. The final touch of hand is with the Supreme.

There is also the consideration of association, *sanga*. Suppose I have purchased a ticket and am going smoothly towards the destination but some *asat-sanga*, some bad association, comes to me. Some mischief monger or some ignorant person may say, "No, no, there is danger ahead so let us get down." I may be influenced by that, falsely. This also may happen that by bad association sometimes Someone may be led to reject a good guru.

Also it may happen that I have purchased my ticket but there comes some doubt, I am perplexed and get down. But ultimately I see that I have done wrong: that I have committed a great wrong. That also may be. Anyhow, our sincere hankering after the truth will come to our rescue, and that sincerity of hankering depends again on the past *sukrti*. The type and the quality of help that was injected into me in my unconscious stage will come to help me always. From the background that will come to dictate to me, "Do this, do this!"

Sincerity is necessary.

Any event is a combination of many things. But those that are sincere, that are eager to help their own self really, they cannot be misguided for long. That should be our solace, our consolation. "If I do not like to be a party to deceive myself then none can deceive me in this world." That fairness of mind one should have, because the vigilant eye of the Absolute is always there. We must have such confidence and such faith that the vigilant eye of the Supreme is

everywhere. I may not see that, but He is my best friend and only I want to come to Him and He knows it. So, to Whom I am going, He is looking at everything although I may not. The Absolute is the absolute possibility. The finite is to go to meet the Infinite! It is the most audacious, the most impossible thing, and we are going to make it possible by our inner urge. Our inner urge, that is everything.

Question: So the calculating mentality may not be our best friend?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It may not be of great help. Of course we cannot avoid calculation when we are in a certain stage. But still we should know that the calculative mentality may not be of much help ultimately. Prayer is more powerful to seek the help of the highest to whom I am trying to go. If I seek His help, then He will send some agent to me. If I should get such an agent on my side along the way, then I will be more secure in my progress. Prayer, prayer and *saranagati*. Prayer reaches to Him only when we surrender.

But calculation may be of the nature of self-analysis: "Here I have nothing, I have no power, so how can I be lifted? My knowledge and my judgment are futile and have got no power. My free will, my judgment, my everything is so meager. So how can it come in contact and make some progress regarding the infinite? This is impossible!" In this way self-analysis will take us to surrender.

Surrender and prayer will be of primary importance to any spiritual student. *Saranagati* means surrender. As much as we make surrender towards Him our prayer will be genuine. When I shall I see myself as clearly helpless then only will my prayer be substantial and then the help will come accordingly.

On the whole there is only one most important factor. *sadhu-sanga*.

So many things are all interdependent but first importance is to be given to *sadhu-sanga*. But *sadhu-sanga* is also affected by the results of so many previous events. So many things are all interdependent but still some points have been given more stress. More importance has been given to firstly *sadhu-sanga*, then *sastra*, then *saranagati*, then prayer. Though many things are there, a complex and interdependent interhelp, but still if we are to select some principle thing for our help the first thing will be *sadhu-sanga*, association with those more advanced than myself, and next importance will be given to the *sastra*, the advices of the great *sadhus*. With these two we shall take practical steps in *saranagati*. *Saranagati* is real when it is sincere.

And sincerity means, "I am helpless. By self-analysis I am helpless."

As much as I consider myself to be helpless my prayer to the Lord will be accordingly intense, and the help from that side will come to that degree.

Sanga means serving attitude, not physical contact but serving. Higher things can be contacted only through the relationship of serving tendency, not otherwise.

Question: Therefore is prayer a more benedicting activity?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Prayer also should be pure. "O Lord give me my bread!" is also a prayer. And another type of prayer is, "Please save me, I do not know what is my real interest. Please enlighten me."

There are so many different types of prayer and how we pray is determined by our association and our spiritual advice.

Question: Is praying for the revelation of the Absolute more important than glorification of the Absolute?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. "Please You reveal within me what truth is, who am I, where am I, what is my goal of life and how to reach there. Why am I suffering? I do not know how to get out of this miserable life, so please help me. I do not know, but only I can guess that You are goodness, ecstasy and happiness. I want you. I am much tired of my present situation, I cannot tolerate it any longer. Please take me up."

Question: Should that type of prayer be given more importance and stressed more than the glorification of the Absolute?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: The prayer to the highest degree that we find is: "I want Your connection. You may utilize me. You may think me to be Yours and keeping me in Your connection utilize me according to Your sweet will. I have no particular claim nor aspiration that I must attain this or that, but only I want to be Your faithful servant and so You please utilize me in any way You like. Only that inseparable connection with You I want. I am Your slave: I want to be Your slave. Your connection I want: Your sincere connection, and You know best what connection that is. I do not know what is what, but You know what is best. Only consider me as Your own and utilize me." That should be the nature of our

prayer.

Question: Should we have a desperate mood?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Desperate? That will depend on the particular disciple. As much sure a conception he gets of his high prospect he becomes desperate to that degree. Surrender means to be desperate, "Whatever may come let it come, but I surrender to You. I have got such confidence in you. I am surrendering to You, and if any revolting forces of the environment come to attack me then I am to tolerate that."

An example is Prahlada Maharaja who received so many tortures even from his so-called near relative, his father. There are several similar examples. If you are *saranagata*, surrendered, to Him then you may have to suffer many things because of that and if you don't become desperate then you will have to come back. With a desperate mentality you are to tolerate all the tortures that will come against you and still you won't budge an inch from your path of progress. That must be.

We must be prepared for any injury in any event. Anything may come, known or unknown, supposed or unsuspected. Anything may come but we are to remain strong in our position. Fixing our eye on Him, it is worth suffering from all types of pains. To stand because, "I am standing for the Truth," will be my solace.

Even in political matters we find that when one is made captive he must be prepared for any sort of torture. Perhaps for earning money, the spy is also working by wandering in the enemy's land, but, if detected, he may have to face all kinds of torture. No risk, no gain! If for the Truth, if for my endeavor to meet the Truth, so many opposing forces revolt against me, then what to do? I shall stand with my head erect: "I am not doing anything wrong." At the same time, like Christ, one should pray, "O Father, they know not what they do, forgive them."

They do not know what wrong things they are doing to me. Forgive them."

Pahlada Maharaja advises that whatever adverse circumstances may come to disturb us we should try to not only see them as opposing and undesirable but we are required to see them as quite befitting: "It *should* come and is coming through the will of my good, well-wishing Lord. Very kindly He is sending these apparently unfavorable things to me but here is His grace." We shall try to read

positive sympathy in the pain and not only negative opposition. One thing to note is that nothing can come without His sanction, so it is coming to me with His sanction. There can be no spirit of retaliation in Him, therefore the pain has come for some purpose: to purify me. This positive end is there. He is trying to finish the bad consequences of my previous actions. "I would otherwise have had to undergo the bad consequences of my actions for a long time to come but perhaps He is making that intense in order to be finished within a very short time. Therefore it is *His* grace." If with this attitude we can face this danger that surrounds us then very easily we are released from all such opposing forces.

When the mother is punishing her child, affection is in the background. There is no spirit of retaliation, rather, there is the spirit of affection: she wants to correct him. But when the child takes the attitude, "Yes. More punishment is required, Mother. I have done so many misdeeds, more punishment is necessary for me." Then the mother will release him very soon; "Oh, he has understood that he did wrong so he should be released now." The result of punishment is reached and so the punishment should be withdrawn.

So whenever the opposing environment comes to pain us, we should see with such a vision that, "It is the benevolence of the Lord that He has sent this suffering to me, to correct me, to release me very soon perhaps. I am inviting you, "Yes, you come. You come. You are my friend. In the garb of enemy you are my friend. You have come to release me very soon, so I welcome you. You are coming because without my Lord's sanction nothing can happen. So when you have come, you have come surely for my benefit, so I welcome you." If with this attitude you can embrace unfavorable circumstances then very soon you will get liberation from the clutches of *maya*.

At the same time it is necessary to show one's gratitude to the Lord, "How kind You are. You have managed to clear my debt from my previous life in so short a time. You are so gracious. So I show my obeisances to You, my Lord. You are so gracious to me. You are trying to finish the reactions of the long-standing misdeeds of my past life which could take birth after birth, infinitely, to clear. But that has been finished within a few hours, so I bow down so faithfully. My faithful obeisances to You, my Lord." With this attitude he gets relief immediately. That is the key to success.

Question: What should be the conception of the devotee when the guru is chastising him? Should he understand that to be for his benefit?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. Mahaprabhu says that when the guru is chastising he is considering the disciple to be his own: he has got much affection. But when he is indifferent then he has kept the disciple at a respectable distance and has not accepted him closely.

When the guru is punishing then that is a great fortune. One can think, "The vigilant eye of gurudeva is over me and he cannot tolerate anything wrong in me. So that is very rare, a great fortune, a great prospect of my life that his vigilant eye is there so that nothing wrong can attack me and take me down. He is there." That the guru is giving punishment presupposes that his guardian's eye is watching over the disciple. So that should be considered a great fortune.

In the last sloka of his *Siksastakam* prayers Mahaprabhu also says how the standard of attachment should be of the devotee towards the Lord.

Here, of course, it is mentioned about Krsna but we will find this similar relationship between disciple and guru.

aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam

adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va

yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato

mat-prana-nathas tu sa eve naparah

(Siksastakam 8)

"Krsna may adore me but, although I think I am holding fast His holy feet, He may also throw me away or trample me down. Furthermore, the next alternative may come that He may be indifferent. He is not coming to punish me, but He may be indifferent: He doesn't care for me. I am nothing to Him. He has eliminated me from His camp and that is more dangerous. He may also be embracing others, showing His affection to others while ignoring me. What one day I expected to have from Him, the others are enjoying and I am debarred from that.

All this show may take place before my very eyes but still I have no other alternative than to hold fast to His feet, to hold His holy legs very fast. I have no other alternative because He is all in all to me."

This sort of adherence to Him we shall try to maintain. "I have no other alternative but His favor. He may show His favor, He may not."

In different stages He may deal with me in different ways. He may show His apathy to me but still I have no other alternative. I am to tolerate all the apathetic eventualities. That is the nature of the tie between the man and the Master. That tie is invulnerable, is inseparable, is eternal and, if cut, that separation may not even be imagined: such closer and natural connection we have got with the Absolute Good.

We cannot even conceive of anything other than our connection with Him, and that is the eternal conception. We are to go on in the eternal plane and we are to find out our eternal contact: the finite's connection with the Infinite. The man and the Master. The Lord and the servant.

In this way it is inconceivable, but inconceivably true. That sort of connection with the Supreme we shall try to find out, and that is the greatest importance of our existence.

Separate existence is not possible. That connection with Him is there, only we forget that. That is the trouble. And in the process of forgetfulness and in the degree of forgetfulness everything becomes an anomaly. All the anomalies can be confined in this single misunderstanding. The whole anomaly exists only by this misunderstanding.

Chapter 5 Highest Dedication, Highest Gain

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Selflessness means to admit that the Lord is all in all. Even the existence can be effaced by His sweet will.

Although we are told that the soul is eternal, His will is the Absolute Will and He can efface me if He wants. The Master can murder the slave. *Marobi rakhobi-jo iccha tohara*, "You can keep me or You can do away with me, this is Your constitutional right. I am fully dependent. You can make or mar with my fortune: anything You like." As much as you will be able to realize your position of helplessness, so much you will enrich yourself from the real standpoint and you will acquire a position there. Vanity will not be allowed there, but just the opposite is required: full humility. Humility has got value there because one should always think oneself to be the negative and not the positive. To have no

rights, but all rights only in His sweet will, is *prema*, love. His grace is our existence in that aspect of reality.

The *sakti*, the female, has got her importance in a particular way. It is not that she will go to imitate the right of the male, for that will be her failure. Similarly, the male has got his own particular way of attitude.

There is the predominating and the predominated. If we want to assert our predominating self then we must have to come in connection with *maya*, the illusory energy where we are *purusa*, enjoyer. But if we want to approach the spiritual realm, then we are not to be *purusa*, but we are to be of female type, dependent type, *sakti*. In relation to Him we are *sakti*, and in relation to *maya* we are *saktimam*, *purusa*. In *maya* we are exploiters, enjoyers, whereas there we are to be enjoyed.

If we seek our relationship with the upper existence then we are to be enjoyed, we are to be handled: subjective existence is there on that side. And here in the lower existence we have come to exploit, to assert, and therefore we are in connection with *maya* and are suffering from the reaction. Here we are *purusa*, and there, in the relativity of the higher, we are *sakti*, potency. Here in the illusory world we can assert that we are *purusa*, that we are enjoyers, but this is false and reactionary. So, try to develop the attitude of your potency characteristic. As much as you will be able to do that you will have value in the higher realm. *Pranipatena*, *pariprasnena*, *sevaya*. By submission you may be allowed to enter into that domain, otherwise not. *Seva*, service, means that you have to be utilized by them. If you will let yourself be utilized for the interest of the higher land, the higher plane, only then will you be allowed to enter there. No exploitation for the *jiva* soul is possible in that land, the country of Paramatma, and above, the land of Krsna.

Question: What about the endeavor of the *mayavadis*, the impersonalists, to understand the Infinite by knowledge (*jnana*) ?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: They cannot enter into that domain. They are showing their feats only here within this mundane world up to Satyaloka. Then in Brahmaloka they merge and are finished there.

Their idea of " *so'ham* "; "I am a part of the highest entity", retains them in Brahmaloka and they can never pass upwards through there towards Vaikuntha.

Whereas with the mood of " *daso 'ham* ," "I am a servant of that highest entity", you will be allowed to enter into the higher realm. *nirmatsaranam satam moksabhisandhir api nirastah*.

Question: What is the endeavor of the practitioner, the *sadhaka*, in calculative devotional service, *vaidhi-bhakti* ?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: He is to follow that program which is recommended in the sastra and by the *sadhu* and gradually he will find himself to be in the proper soil. He will find that he is gaining some ground and he will thereby receive encouragement to continue his attempt towards that upper realm. He will get some reliable taste, *ruci*.

Up to *ruci* he is to undergo some *sadhana*, some program as recommended by the *sadhu* and the *sastra*, and by that he will get help.

Up until just before *apana-dasa*, the stage of wholehearted exclusive acceptance, he is to take the trouble of *sadhana*. On reaching *apana-dasa*, self-realization will begin and then he himself will stand guarantee for his own activities. He will directly feel, "O, I am realizing a novel type of ecstasy", and he won't be taken away from that position.

The main thing is that we can acquire higher things by service.

Sacrifice and have: pay. Pay for it. That does not mean paying in terms of money and other things, but paying in terms of your own self: surrender and have. Give and get. As you can give, so you can get a similar thing.

ye yatha mam prapadyante, tams tathaiva bhajamy aham

mama vartmanuvartante, manusyah partha sarvasah

(Bhagavad-gita 4.11)

"Because there is none beyond Me, they are praying to Me for some trifling things and I also am giving trifle in return, but it will be finished and then again they will be in want. But this is like playing.

However, for someone who is serious, who wants Me, he shall also have to pay for that. That price is his whole self, however little it may be. He is to give

himself wholly and he will get Me wholly. As he gives, so he gets. Come out with your small goods, your little capital, and you will get hugely in return."

Question: But I am bankrupt!

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It is a good sign. If one is bankrupt here, then he will seek some shelter. If one is really bankrupt then he must sincerely seek a shelter.

Question: Maharaja, I would like to arrange a loan from you!

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: A loan! This is all loan. I am also in loan: we are continuing the business in loan from gurudeva. It is a business on loan. The business in the negative side is all on loan.

yare dekha, tare kaha 'krsna'-upadesa

amara ajnaya guru haya tare' ei desa

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Madhya 7.128)

"Whoever you find, talk with him only about Krsna. Try to save him from the desert of mortality. I am giving you backing. I command you. Don't be afraid; take the position of guru, the giver, and give it to everyone." It is the order of Mahaprabhu and He tells that He is the capitalist (*amara ajnaya*). He takes the risk of the position of a capitalist.

In *maya*, illusion, it is difficult for us to digest the truth that, "I am small." We don't like to digest this, to accept this: and that is the rub.

Our inner evil tendency is to capture the right of others, but we are to understand what is freedom. Here we really are accustomed to think that we can encroach over the freedom of others of the environment.

That is the disease. Alternatively, the reactionary tendency is to think, "I shall commit suicide, that is, let us enter the tomb, *samadhi*. If I cannot exercise my freedom on the environment outside, then rather I shall enter the tomb, the grave, but I won't accept slavery, the serving attitude to the environment.." We are frightened to become a servant:

"I want to be an exploiting unit, but not a serving unit, that I shall give my

freedom to another superior hand." It is there that we shrink away and that is the inner defect. By freedom we understand that we have freedom to exercise right over the environment. But why should we not accept service for the environment? Why? We think that we shall be reduced to the minimum position. But to do for others, to become a servant, is healthy for us and there we can thrive. We can thrive by serving the environment, and especially the Lord of the whole. We think that if we render service then we are dying. That temperament, false temperament, has grown within us, and that is a foreign element which has covered the *jiva* proper. It is a bitter pill to swallow.

So what is service proper? Hegel's philosophy is "Die to Live" dissolve your ego as it is at present. Dissolve it mercilessly: die. Die means to dissolve, mercilessly. Throw yourself into the fire and you will come out with a bright self. Learn to die as you are: that mental concocted body, that concocted energy. Take the name of the Lord and die. *Bhakativinoda aj apane bhulila*. Forget yourself as you are at present and you will find your proper self there that does not die.

Death is ordained for our existence so give to the death that part of you that is ordained to die, and the eternal part of you will remain.

But Mahaprabhu has discouraged the physical death. He told Sanatana Goswami,

"sanatana, deha-tyage krsna yadi paiye

koti-deha ksaneke tabe chadite pariye"

(Chaitanya charitamrita, Antya 4.55)

"I am ready to die millions and crores of times in a second if that would give me Krsna, but that dying is nothing." This physical death is *tamasik*, it is a very much lower bait. Not only physical death, but real death, the wholesale death, is necessary. Then also I may only get that *tatastha*, borderline stage. But Mahaprabhu says, "Die or not die, go on cultivating Krsna consciousness with the company of a *sadhu*."

Go on with the company of a devotee of Krsna. Try to accumulate that internal wealth by whatever means it is possible."

The internal capital can be had only from the *sadhu* . Wherever you can get it and with whatever price you must pay, try to secure that innermost wealth. Not mere physical death or mental death has the reach to take you to that higher stage. You are to dive deep into Krsna consciousness. Wherever and whenever you find someone with such strong attachment for Krsna you must try to secure it from him at any price and that will be the best utilization of your life and energy. You are to purchase the higher thing and that is also at the sacrifice of the higher type of substance within you. You are to have innermost hankering and the transaction will be by the surrendering of your innermost existence. The encasements: the physical encasements and mental encasements of different types are many: *Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, Satya*. There are so many varieties and types of physical and mental encasements. The many subtle encasements from gross to finer do not end only in Viraja and Brahmaloka but even consciousness has its gross portion in Vaikuntha. But more subtle within you is that Krsna consciousness where the dedication is intense to its highest capacity, and that is dedication to the Autocrat.

Dedication there is to the Autocrat, not to a constitutional king where there is justice, but dedication to Krsna, to that Autocrat: anything can happen! The highest degree of dedication is necessary there. The gain is also similar: it is of the highest type. As much as you can risk, so much you can expect to gain. That is, Mahaprabhu gives the direction:

"Don't be a miser, but surrender yourself to the Autocrat, the Absolute Good, and you will be the best gainer!" That is His recommendation.

So don't be too calculative and don't be a miser. If you find a proper place then give yourself totally (*atmaniksepa*).

We have come to the proper place to offer our service, and Krsna is the highest bidder. He is the highest bidder in the auction and He will pay most, He will pay so much that none can match His bid. He is the highest capitalist. But He is whimsical and He is prodigal! Krsna is only known and knowable by the higher type of love and affection.

bhaktyaham ekaya grahyah

"By *bhakti* alone I can be approached. Not otherwise. Exclusive devotion is necessary for you to come to Me: there is no other way."

naham vedair na tapasa, na danena na cejyaya

sakya evam vidho drastum, drstavan asi yan mama

(Bhagavad-gita, 11.53)

"In no way am I approachable except by exclusive devotion."

We are not satisfied by ordinary things which are available in nature.

We have come to try for our prospect of something so high, so rare, so real.
Krsna tells Arjuna:

hato va prapsyasi svargam, jitva va bhoksyase mahim

tasmad uttistha kaunteya, yuddhaya krtā niscayah

(Bhagavad-gita, 2.37)

"If killed in battle you will attain heaven, or by gaining victory you will enjoy the Earth. Therefore. O Arjuna, being confident of success, rise for battle." For him to give up the fight would be ruinous.

Our campaign is so adventurous! If we are successful we have got the highest thing, but if unsuccessful then our prospect and our whole life is gone. Gone! With this risk we have come to search for the most precious thing: we must remember this and not go back.

We are to proceed with the search and inquiry, for if He is known then everything is known. With this temptation we have come.

yasmin jnate sarvam idam vijnatam bhavati

yasmin prapte sarvam idam praptam bhavati

tad vijijnasasva tad eva brahma

Try to have experience about the root of everything, then everything will be at your command and in your hand. *Krsnanusandhana*: search for Sri Krsna. What is that *brahma*, that Paramatma, and all these stale things? Krsna is the very gist of them: Krsna consciousness is necessary. Everything is His. He has the

monopoly. So, search after Krsna: He is such. He is an autocrat, but He is a thief and He is a cheat!

Mahaprabhu one day in Navadvipa was taking the name, " *Gopi, Gopi, Gopi* ." One gentleman who was from the so-called educated class of that time objected saying "O Pandit, O Nimai Pandit, why do You take the name of " *Gopi, Gopi, Gopi* "? That recommendation has not been found in any *sastra* but we have found the name of Krsna in some scriptures and there it is told that some sort of good effect may be expected by chanting that. So You may take the name of Krsna, but why do you take the name of " *Gopi, Gopi, Gopi*?“ It is out of all the scriptures. Are You mad? What do You do wasting Your time? You are a brilliant scholar but what is Your degradation, Your deplorable degradation?"

Mahaprabhu was in a mood: "Who will take the name of Krsna? He is a traitor! Just see how He has treated the gopis! With so much sincere love they approached Him, but then He was so cruel that He left them and went away leaving them crying. Who will take the name of Krsna? You have come to canvass Me for the party of Krsna and so I shall teach you a lesson!" And Mahaprabhu went to beat that gentleman with a stick.

That man thought Mahaprabhu to be stark mad. He thought Nimai Pandit to be finished, totally mad, and ran away. Returning to his own group he told, "Nimai Pandit came to strike me with a bamboo stick.

Now we must have to teach Him a good lesson. Mahaprabhu said, "Don't take the name of Krsna, He is very cruel, a treacherer. He gives hope to His servitors, then flies away. So don't go that side. We shall rather worship the *gopis* who can give but cannot come back. They can approach to us but they do not know to come back, to retrace. We must worship them!"

The foremost *gopi* is Radharani. She is the highest giver, the highest dedicator. None can venture to come beside Her except Vrajendranandana. She is *Mahabhava-svarupini* . Sacrifice at its zenith is there: the highest standard ever is eternally represented there.

Nowhere else is there such sacrifice, self-giving, self-surrendering. It is beyond all standards ever known to the world of scriptures.

Laksmidevi has no place near Krsna, and similarly Narayana also cannot approach towards Radharani, nor even Dvarakesa, Mathuresa nor even Gopesa,

what to speak of others.

It may seem that all the *gopis* were of equal rank in the *rasa* dance, but some fine jealousy arose in the mind of Radharani, and after showing Her superiority in chanting and dancing, ect. She suddenly disappeared. She conquered the common *gopis* and after defeating them She disappeared suddenly. Krsna suddenly found Himself vacant. All the source of His energy was coming from that one point and the dance was taking place. But when that very vitality was taken away He found Himself vacant. He searched after Her but could not find Her. He then stealthily left the company of all the *gopis* in search of Srimati Radharani. *Radha madhaya hrdaye tatyaya brajasundari.*

Jayadeva says that so many *gopis* are on one side. but they are outweighed by Radharani. They are all abandoned and Krsna goes out to search for Her. This is also admitted in Mahaprabhu's discussions with Ramananda Raya where it is told that there is a categorical difference between the quality of the loving service of the *gopis* and that of Radharani.

I composed one verse that tells that at every point in *Srimad Bhagavatam* there is the presence of Srimati Radharani because She is the goal there.

yad amiya-mahima srirbhagavatyah kathayam

pratipadam anubhutam capy alabdhvabhidheya

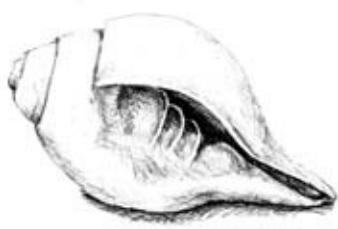
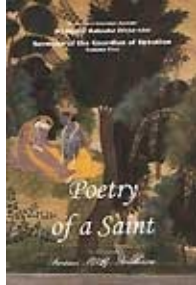
tad akhila-rasa-murti-syama-lilavalambam

madhura-rasa-dhi-radha-padapadmam prapadye

She is the conclusion to be established in *Bhagavatam* by so many descriptions of events, so many stories of devotion etc. The highest aim of *Bhagavatam* is to establish *Radha-dasyam*, service to Radharani, and everything in *Bhagavatam* is preparatory towards that end. But still Her name is not mentioned anywhere in *Bhagavatam*.

Everywhere in *Srimad Bhagavatam* every word is used only to prove Her noblest position, but still no name is expressively given there for Her. Krsna is *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*: He is the combination of all sorts of ecstasies, and the main support of that *akhila-rasamrta-murtih* is Srimati Radhika. She is the only support of that *lila* of Syama: the sole support, the fountain of *madhura-rasa*

(Divine Consortherhood). I surrender myself to the Holy Feet of that Srimati Radharani who is the only support, the gist, the all in all of the whole life of *akhila-rasamrta-murtih*: of He who consists in Himself of all sorts of high *rasas*, ecstasies. She is His only support and I surrender myself to Her Holy Feet.



Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Jayatah!

Poetry of a Saint

Sri Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Divya-vani

Volume Five

Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Edited by Tridandi Swami Sripad B.P. Hrsikesa

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Poetry of a Saint

Introduction

The Divine Realm of the Soul

Our real home is an abundance of freedom and comfort. It is a place where there is a natural transaction of faith, love, and affection. It is inconceivable. The scriptures say, “Do not venture to test the unthinkable plane with your reasoning.

That plane really is beyond the capacity of your thought. It is under a different set of laws. Your mathematical calculations and conclusions in this world are acquainted with points, planes, and solids. At present you are a man in the world of solids, and you have some limited association with planes and points in a somewhat abstract way. Therefore, how can you calculate higher things of which you have no knowledge? The ways of living and the laws of that domain are all unknown to you, so you should not try to debate that. That plane is of quite a different nature. Do not rush to bring within your experimental laboratory, those items which are beyond the capacity of your thinking. That would be pure foolishness.”

Higher things do exist, but the general man in this world has no knowledge about them. We are men of experience and have some knowledge, but only to a particular degree and standard. We cannot venture to calculate what is beyond our reach in this three-dimensional world. But if those who actually have experience of that plane will come to us and give us some information, then we can make some comparison: “This gentleman of a particular experience of ether has written in this way, another gentleman who has experience and has also experimented about ether has written in another particular manner.” In this way we can gain some understanding from their investigation and their real connection with the subject matter.

In this section of those investigating telescopes, we can make a comparison of their findings. The experience of one researcher with his telescope is of a certain type, and we can also learn about the experience of others with their particular telescopes. With the information available to us from their actual connection with the telescopes and their experiments, we may be able to conclude that perhaps a certain telescope was more powerful, another more powerful in a particular field. So, we have some limited capacity to compare what has been discovered beyond our senses by means of the telescope – even though we ourselves may not have a telescope.

The subject of the higher things discovered by the mental “telescope”, or soul’s “telescope”, has been dealt with in the revealed scriptures. Such subject matter is known by the saints, and we are to take their help in order to have entrance within that land. We are not at present in a position to have experience of the higher plane. However, later, by the help of the saints and sacred scriptures, *Poetry of a Saint* when we shall ourselves have that type of telescope, we shall be able to have such a higher experience.

Do not let the argumentative spirit overshadow everything. Argument is not all in all: it is not that it must be the resort of every belief. The spiritual realm is inconceivable, but still we are to try to understand things according to our capacity, faith, and realization. Above all, we have to accommodate within our minds, that sweetness is sweet, and truth is truth – however strong it may be. But one word of caution is in order: we should not take any standard from here and apply it to that higher realm.

If one has no eyes but another can see, the blind man will naturally seek help from the one who has vision. We are also blind to what is within ourselves.

Otherwise, what is the necessity of consulting a doctor? The doctor can see what we cannot: he will diagnose and then we will undergo treatment. Naturally we shall have respect and will give him something for his assistance. It is not unreasonable.

The divine guide or bona fide guru is the specialist doctor, and we shall understand his or her qualification when we come to see that what he or she says is real – and not imaginary. Such vision will depend upon the degree of awakening of the eye. If one who is blind is treated by a capable doctor, he will gradually directly perceive, “Yes, I begin to see something. I now have some eye experience.” From that time on, he will not care for the speculative opinions of the other blind people, but he will have his direct capacity to see. With the coming of sight, he can understand that the application of the medicine has had some real effect.

Scientific understanding is also similar. In earlier days when Faraday discovered electricity, many people laughed. “What is this? It is mere curiosity. What utility can we derive from this electricity?”

I once read an account of Faraday demonstrating an experiment to show the

effect of his discovery. He generated electricity with a machine and then he showed small pieces of paper being moved by that electric current. Many were satisfied to see his new discovery, but then a lady remarked, “But after all this, Mr. Faraday, what practical benefit shall we derive from this luxury play of yours?”

Faraday replied, “Madam, can you please tell me what is the utility of a newborn babe?” His point was that when a baby is born we are to take care of him. Then, when grown, his energy will be put to work usefully. Similarly, some consider that God consciousness is only a luxury, a fashion, or like playing, i.e. that it has no practical application or direct utility.

But when God consciousness becomes intense, those who experience it will see that all other activities, however apparently important, have no permanent value.

Why? Because ultimately we want to live. We don’t want to die. To live is the main necessity and the general necessity of us all. No one can deny that they want to live. And not only live, but live happily, properly, and consciously.

Furthermore, we want to avoid all affliction and misery. When God consciousness arises within someone, he can see clearly. “Why is everyone engaged in a wild goose chase in this material world? Everyone wants happiness, but all are running after an imaginary phantasmagoria.”

Happiness can never be produced from mortal things. We are making a transaction with the mortal world, but that cannot bring satisfaction: it can only lose our energy. What we collect on one side, disappears on another. A person should neither accept nor tolerate this sort of waste of energy as the principle of life. Such a wise person can see another plane of life. They can see that they are not a party to this mortal world that is like the domain of a playground. They will feel. “I am immortal. I am a member of the eternal world, but I have somehow become entangled in this mortal aspect of existence. So, as soon as I can shake off this connection, I shall then stand in my proper, normal position.”

They will find that they themselves – the soul, the feeler, the conceiver – is a member of another soil but they have become entangled within this mortal pain-producing world. Yet still, with the strength of their realization, they can make improvement in their progress to the immortal plane. As proof positive comes before us we shall feel sure, “Now I see these things and hear these things, and

this experience is so much more real than the world about me. The world is vague, but what I now see and hear is more real than that.”

A direct transaction is possible with the soul, with God, and with God’s land.

Where we are presently living is the plane of indirect transactions: first the eye, ear, and other senses collect experience, then it goes to the mind before we can have experience of this world. But in the case of the soul, we feel everything directly ourselves without the help of any instrument, without the intervention of an intermediary.

Through the microscope we see one thing, and through the naked eye we see something else. There is a difference. Through the eye, ear, nose and tongue we have some experience of this world, but concerning the soul, if we can withdraw from the “progress” in the negative side, we shall be able to feel, “Oh! This is the nature of the soul.” We shall directly feel who we are without the help of any instrument. So, ironically, hopelessness here in this mortal realm is a prerequisite to hope in the divine realm.

The soul can see himself, he can focus upon himself and through introspection, he will realize his own innate nature. Through the process of introspection, the soul – without the help of any other instrument – will perceive all possible conceptions of himself directly. He will then understand his own soil: he will gain the conception of a higher type of soil. On that positive side he will discover: “I do not die.”

The material plane is the plane of misrepresentation and misunderstanding, but in the higher plane there is no misunderstanding. Once admitted there, our conception, though it may be partial, will be clear and true. Anyone having that experience will be convinced and he will be determined to go forward.

Socrates could feel that the soul was immortal. He was so intense with his feeling that he did not give any value to his own life in this mundane world. He neglectfully disconnected himself from this world because, with great conviction, he knew the soul to be immortal. Jesus also was so much convinced of his Lord that he did not give any care for the happiness and pleasures of this world: he neglectfully rejected it all.

There are many things invisible to this fleshy eye that are visible with the eye of knowledge. We can concede that the eye of knowledge can see many things that

the fleshy eye cannot. Similarly, a deep vision exists by which we can see things in a different, more hopeful way: “Come and see!”

An eye cannot see when it is covered by cataract: but when the cataract is removed, the eye can see. Ignorance is like a cataract in our eye that causes us blindness. Our vision is only superficial, but deeper vision can see many things.

This eye backed by the eye of knowledge can see many things – deeper and deeper. Our apparent sight has no value. Real value is present in the seer who can see with deeper vision. And all are not equal: there are the wise, the wiser, and even the wiser still. There is gradation, and according to his capacity, the seer will see.

It is easy to see that at present we are members of this mortal world: but by what are we connected? It is our body that is the member. If we can go above the body we can go to the mind, then on to the intelligence, then to the soul. We shall find that the plane where the souls live is eternal, and the soul himself is also eternal. From there we can go on to search after the Supersoul, the origin of all our thoughts.

The Supersoul is likened to the sun that is the origin of all rays of light. These rays or particles of light are the individual souls – to which we belong. Once we find a ray of light we can approach the sun from which all rays emanate.

Similarly, from the conception of our own selves, knowing ourselves to be particles of consciousness, we can search out a plane of super-consciousness, super-knowledge, and super-existence. In this way we can progress to the Ultimate Cause, the Source from which everything flows. But we cannot go just according to our own whim and minute freedom. Some sort of help and guidance from that plane is indispensably necessary. Such help comes in the form of guru, the Vaisnavas, and other agents of that land. With their help, we can make honest progress towards the goal.

At present we are like monarchs of all we survey, but what we survey is all transient, mortal, and reactionary. What is pleasing today will later turn into pain, therefore we must seek a good position somewhere else, a good place to build our home elsewhere. In the course of that search we shall find that we do have our own home, and it is all-perfect.

In the beginning, we may think that we shall be going to some unknown quarter:

“Innumerable living entities are here around me in my present world, but where I am now trying to go, that is uncertain. It seems imaginary and abstract.”

However, when we begin our journey we shall gradually find that almost all existence is in that side, the side where all are truthful. We shall find that this material side is very meagre and limited, and here there is only a tiny representation of the truth.

From here, we may think that most of the existing universe is ensconced here and only a very few special souls go from here to the immortal world such as Socrates, Mohammed, and Buddha. But gradually we shall come to understand

that the higher world is infinitely greater than the mundane portion we see here.

We shall gradually come to understand that, as in a country, a few people are confined to a hospital or a prison and are suffering. Similarly, a paltry few persons are here in this mundane plane to be rectified. As this becomes clearer to us, we shall feel more courage to proceed, and with greater speed we shall run towards our home. Let us go home, and the nearer we are to home, our speed will increase more and more, “Oh. This is my homeland!”

At present, we are outside and our mind is also focused outside. We are helplessly moving. Our hope lies only in the grace of the divine agents. They come to pick us up and warn us. “What are you doing? Do not go on that side. It is the land of danger, the land of death. Come along with me. I shall take you to the land of eternal nectar.”

Those agents come to arouse us from our slumber, our ignorant madness. They are the Vaisnavas, and they have also given the Vedas that give some history of the divine realm and of the saints who have gone there. Through the scriptures, our faith will gradually develop and we shall increasingly keep association with the saints. In so doing, we shall make ever more quickly, intense progress towards our true domicile.

“Home, back to God, back to home – sweet, sweet home.” This sort of feeling we shall find within us if we are fortunate to be allowed a little participation by the grace of the canvassers of that land – the agents of the Lord, the messengers of love divine. We shall be taken to that proper soil and we shall gain some solid familiar type of conception of what our real home is like. In this way we shall progress to that side.

Chapter 1 Pillars of Faith

The Heart-Light of Faith

“Faith is our only hope. One who endeavours to acquire faith always looks for the association of the faithful. As one fire-light lights another without diminution in the same way faith – the light in the heart of a devotee – enhances another devotee’s heart-light.”

The light-ray of Faith

The devotion in the heart of a devotee goes to develop the same faith or devotion in another devotee's heart, i.e. *sadhu-sanga*. We can enhance our faith by association with the saints – the devotees of the Lord. We may ask, “By what means?” If I chance to connect with the saints (*sadhus*), then a light-ray of faith in their hearts will come to develop my faith. In this way, *sadhu* and *sastra* come to help us: firstly through the living saints and secondly, the passive saints in the form of scriptures and sacred books containing that knowledge. However, the association of the devotees who have got “fire” in their spirit is immeasurably stronger.

What is the nature of that faith? That faith is in the surrender to the Absolute will. That Absolute Will then manifests Himself within as the Super-subject, the Supersoul or the Oversoul. That fine Super-subjective existence can come down to this gross plane. However, we cannot make Him the object of our sensual inspection. Our experience here is inadequate to make any judgement or understand that higher Super-subjective existence.

The Descent of Divine Current

The Super-subject, the Over-soul, descends to reveal Himself to the *jiva* soul.

The *jiva* soul perceives the higher, heretofore inconceivable experience – within his consciousness. When the Super-subject withdraws Himself, then the *jiva* has only the recollection of that experience. This is the ontological development of faith in that Super-subjective Existential World.

Krsna is Super-subjective. In comparison, we are very gross. Being unlimited, the Super-subject can approach and commit Himself but we find ourselves unable to approach Him with our own demands. We are depending on the Lord's Sweet Will for His Divine Connection. That is our position. If He does not come to us, then we are nowhere.

So, surrendering – and not by any other means – by developing our negative side, our hunger, we are able to draw the Lord's attention toward our paltry selves. In this way, we can pray to have His connection. I have got no right to think that He will come within my grasp, by my will. This is not possible.

Absolute Independence, Absolute Freedom and Absolute Initiative is there in

Him. Then, how can we have His association? It is only by increasing our negative side through thirst and intense prayer that, “My Lord, I am needy. I hanker for Your divine connection.” In this way, our prayer may reach that plane and He may fulfil our need. Our connection is only possible in this manner – by deeply understanding and developing our negative side. Only then have we got some prospect in this life – and not otherwise.

Surrender, devotion, serving temperament

The negative side is aspiring to surrender wholesale at the Lord’s disposal.

Those devotees think, “It is the Lord’s Sweet Will that we can be utilized for His own purpose.” In this way it is by our faith that our own self-determination to surrender to His Divine Will reaches the Lord and this transaction gives chance for the jiva to be utilized by the Supreme Himself. On the whole, the negative can attract the positive. That capacity is there. So, surrender, devotion, serving temperament and offering everything to the Lord – that has got its intrinsic value. It is not assertive; it is dependent. Still, in the Absolute Realm, it has got some real value. It is not without value. It does not go unrecognized. In the Srimad Bhagavatam (9.4.63), the Lord says:

aham bhakta-paradhino, hy asvatantra iva dvija

sadhubhir grasta-hrdayo bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyah

“Although I am free, I still feel as if I am subordinate to My devotee’s affection.

My devotee surrenders everything and expects nothing in return without My sanction. How can I not give Myself to such surrender? Although constitutionally I am free – still, their attraction, affection, earnestness, sincerity and dependence captures Me. Attracted by My devotee’s love, I offer Myself at their behest.”

The corresponding side is like that. But in the Absolute sense, He is free and we are always dependent.

The Potency is dependent on – is owned by – the Potent, the substance.

Substance and Potency are co-related, in fact, inseparable. We say that Substance is the main Subject and Potency is dependent on Him.

This is the conception in the normal state of existence. And the *jiva* is part and parcel of His Potency. So, constitutionally, we are dependent on His mercy.

The Zone of Dedication

We want affinity in intimacy with gurudeva, and it is he who has the connection with the Centre – with the Substance. If I can maintain a bona fide relationship with *Gurudeva*, then automatically I shall get Him. This is also there. In a bona fide negative position, the devotees have also got their attraction to draw the Lord towards them and vice-versa. But presently, we are outside that zone. We are to enter that zone of dedication and proper transaction with *Gurudeva*.

prati anga lagi kande, prati anga mora

(Jnana Dasa, in his *Vaisnava-padavali* “Anthology of Vaisnava Songs”)

“Every atom of one spiritual body is the Negative for every atom of the Positive.

Every atom of the Absolute Counterpart (The Potency) is crying to be united with the corresponding atom of The Potent Himself.”

Radha-Krsna comprise the negative-positive represented wholesale. One is Beauty Personified and Another, is absorbing that Beauty and distributing it to others.

Sri Chaitanyadev is both Radha and Krsna combined. He is Krsna in the mood of Radha searching for Himself both Positive-Negative combined. Sri Sankara and others say this combination produces equilibrium, but in Vaisnava philosophy, this equilibrium is dynamic. The Positive is searching for Himself in the mood of the Negative – serving His own Positive Self. In this way the Positive, Sri Krsna is distributed to the public in the mood of the Negative, Sri Radha. This is Sri Chaitanyadev personified. The higher, closer associates of the Lord disclose to us such impressions. We will be able to understand according to the intensity of our faith.

The importance of Faith

Faith is the only instrument by which we the finite can measure the Infinite. All other methods are futile – useless. Faith is the widest substance within us. It is

not imagination. Faith can carry us a long way. Faith has got a tangible position within us. When we disconnect from all phases of knowledge and experience then we can live only in the plane of faith. When all the wealth of our experience – the whole world of our experience – finally retires and wholesale dissolution ensues then we shall find faith is there dutifully attending us. This is the innate nature of the soul. It is fundamental.

The dissolution of the body, mind and senses absorbed in their world of experience, will take us nowhere. The sun, the moon, the ether, the air and everything around us – will vanish in wholesale dissolution. At that time, the soul will continue to live in the world of faith – an eternal substance within us.

We are told that with the help of favourable circumstances, with the help of faith, we can go back to God, back to Home. Such a prospect is given to us in this world of mortality – this world of burial grounds and cremation grounds.

Here, everything will be buried.

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,

All that beauty - all that wealth e’er gave,

Awaits alike the inevitable hour:

The path of glory leads but to the grave.”

Gray’s Eulogy

Everything ends in the grave. All the achievements of the boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, the beauty and the wealth obtained – all are in the world of experience, which is treacherous. All such achievements end in the grave. Only faith is not treacherous: it will remain with the soul – within – giving hope, prospect and sustenance. Home comfort. Back to Home, back to God where there is a proposal of alternatives so attractive that what sort of man will subsequently run after the experience of this ‘civilized’ atomic world? Science and experience are merely the Jaws of Death.

The Halo of Srimati Radharani

Faith has this kind of capital! Faith is nothing vague. Someone is awake in this

world of experience. His day is the world of experience. His night is the soul's world, the world of spirit. Another class of men are wakeful in the soul world and are sleeping in this world of experience which is darkness for them. They are awake in that world of faith and that is a permanent world. My soul is a factor in that world of faith – however tiny – and it has got some substantial position in eternity. It is an eternal factor and whatever I see in that plane, it is all eternal. None will be effaced (expunged) at any time. I am a member of that world of reality through faith and I can go to such a subtle plane of existence.

There, I find that this subtle plane never dies nor undergoes transformation. No transformation in this plane of existence. He has no connection with the man of this world of experience in flesh and blood. That man is faithless – he is wakeful in this world but the world of Reality is night for him.

Misguided faith is not faith proper – not real faith. We cannot say that a misconception of a thing is the thing proper. There is possibility of misconception of anything and everything. Light is not merely the opposite of darkness; they are not in the same genre. A little light can remove a large amount of darkness, testifying to the latter's weak nature. Light can penetrate darkness; it can also penetrate light. It is possible according to the degree of its existence.

Similarly, faith is almost non-existent in our present conditioned state. Yet faith is clearly perceived as a higher substance, having super-subjective existence.

Someday, the whole of this mundane creation will vanish... but faith will remain forever. Faith is the particular potency of Srimati Radharani.

sukha-rupa krsna kare sukha asvadana

bhakta-gane sukha dite 'hladini'-karana

Chaitanya-charitamrita Madhya 8.158

“Ecstasy is Krsna Himself through which He feels, tastes and enjoys Himself. It is only possible through faith to transmit and distribute that sort of ecstatic joy to others. Faith is the very nature of that ecstatic potency, ‘*hladini sakti*’ that is represented by Srimati Radharani in full. That faith can transmit Krsna Consciousness to the devotees and others outside its own circle.”

Faith is the Halo of Srimati Radharani by the light of which others may

understand Krsna. When the negative combines with the positive, they distribute their understanding for the utility and benefit of those outside. All parts of the negative aspect, the 'Mother' negative, the 'Centre' negative can expand and transmit this sort of faith and joy. 'Sraddha' – faith – is a peculiar substance which is to be inquired about and understood in depth.

The World of Matter is Underground

It is not abstract. We are wakeful in this material world. But there are others who are completely awake in this plane of faith. This world of matter is underground – far away from the devotee's conception of faith. This tangible world of enjoyment and exploitation is far, far away from those who are deeply engaged in the world of service through faith. These devotees feel that even desiring to see Krsna is also some kind of enjoyment. They say, "No, no, we will not disturb His sweet will. Whenever He likes He may call for us, then we shall get the chance to see Him, otherwise not."

We want Krsna – but not to order Him. "O Krsna, come and stand before us. We want to see You for our satisfaction." This is a kind of imposition by our exploiting nature. The devotees do not want for the satisfaction of their eye, or their inner hankering, that the Lord has to come and show Himself. This is not the conception of the higher devotees. They do not allow these thoughts to enter.

"No, whenever Krsna feels the necessity, He will call for me. I shall then have a chance of seeing Him."

Subtle Discriminations

Sri Madhavendra Puri was fasting. He did not even beg for his livelihood from others. If something to eat comes, automatically, he may take that: otherwise he would fast. On a particular occasion. Krsna came and supplied some food to him and remarked. "O Puri, why do you not go begging for your food? Why do you remain fasting?" And we think that Madhavendra Puri was very fortunate because Krsna Himself came and supplied him with food. However, a qualitatively higher devotion we find in Srila Sanatana Goswami. When Srimati Radharani came and supplied foodstuff to Srila Rupa Goswami for cooking paramanna, milk-rice, then Srila Sanatana Goswami was very much disturbed at heart.

He challenged him, "What is this, Rupa? Did you aspire after something for

me?”

Rupa replied, “Yes, I did my Lord. I thought if I could get some milk and rice, then I would prepare some milk-rice which is your favourite and invite you to take that *prasadam*.”

Sanatana Goswami was irritated, “Oh, you have done wrong, Rupa. I have never found such taste amongst the ordinary objects of this world! It is so tasteful it must have originated from a special place. From where did you obtain this rice?”

Rupa explained, “A girl came in the name of her family guardians and supplied the materials to me.”

Then Sanatana inquired, “Who is that girl?”

Rupa went to search her out in the nearby village of Javat, but she was not there – nor did anyone in the village ever remember seeing such a girl. Then Srila Sanatana Goswami could understand that Srimati Radharani Herself had come and supplied the ingredients.

Excitedly Sanatana said, “We are searching for Srimati Radharani to serve Her and now She has come and served us! What is this? What have you done, my brother? You wanted something to please me and that was supplied by Srimati Radharani. This is just the opposite of what we wanted – only to serve Srimati Radharani. Yet, She has come, served us and has gone away. This is our great misfortune.” Sanatana Goswami was very dissatisfied and left with these thoughts.

Srila Rupa Goswami could not take that *prasadam* either. He had invited his *Gurudev* to take but he found just the opposite took place. He reflected, “I wanted to satisfy my Guru, to serve him, but what has happened?” Rupa Goswami also left that place and ran after Sanatana Goswami to try to appease him.

Exhaustively eliminate Worldly Desires

So, we find that Krsna carried food for Sri Madhavendra Puri and, in some consideration, that was a great fortune. But here a similar occurrence took place, and was considered a great misfortune by Sanatana Goswami. The higher kind of devotees never desire Krsna to serve them, supply them or give them darsana

of Himself. To impose our whim on the Lord is not service proper. Whatever Krsna likes, He may do. However, we shall consider ourselves fortunate if we are given a chance to supply whatever is necessary for His service.

We have to exhaustively eliminate all our worldly desires to the extreme. We are to fully place ourselves at the disposal of that Supreme Autocrat Who is to command us, to order us and never to carry out any order from us. His nature is like that. He is eager to supply everything for His devotees, but they do not like that the Lord will carry these necessities to them (Bhagavad-gita 9.22):

yoga-ksemam vahamy aham

Devotees of higher realization do not prefer Krsna to supply them with anything or serve them in any way. Their pure devotion is of this quality. They sincerely feel, “He is our Lord through faith. We don’t want to see Him in order to satisfy our lower faculties that, ‘He does indeed exist.’ We have got no capacity to see Him.” A lower kind of faith means trying to become the subject – making Him the object. A higher kind of faith – a more intense faith – proves that He is the Original Subjective Cause of everything. The Lord is that wonderful cause of everything from where all these effects come.

Carvaka, who belongs to a particular class of atheists, says, “No, no, there is no God – no higher substance. Whatever we see on the surface – that is all-in-all – everything.” However, deeper faith says, the Cause of all causes is there – from whom everything is coming, everything is maintained and everything at last enters into again. The effect is not everything. That is not complete. The Cause is also present there in the effect.

The All-Fulfilling Cause

What is the nature of the cause? Some say *Brahman* is the cause; some say it is *Paramatma*, the Supersoul; still others say it is *Bhagavan*, Godhead, who predestines and is the designer of everything – the primal etiology. His potency is of a particular type. While creating and controlling everything, His potencies are automatically existing within Him.

sakala chadiya bhai sraddhadevira guna gai

yanra krpa bhakti dite pare

“In this way, give up everything and only try to keep faith.”

Everything is there in faith. You do not require any proof. It is meanness to search after proof of God’s existence. Deep faith says, “He is existing. Whatever I am searching for – everything is in Him and He is everywhere. *Omkara* – the seed of everything! The seed of theism is *Omkara*. “*Om*” means a big “Yes”.

Wherever I cast my glance to search for something – in one word it is, “Yes”.

Whatever you are searching for – that is! – “Yes”, it does exist! You are searching for happiness, for pleasure, for joy, for fulfilment and the answer is all in one word – “Yes”. Whatever you are searching for, whatever fulfilment you are in want of – it is there in one word, “*Om*” – “Yes”. “*Om*” becomes *Gayatri*, then *Veda* and then *Vedanta*. It then comes to take the shape of *Srimad Bhagavatam* which contains the divine pastimes of the Lord.

The Scriptures beg His Forgiveness

The *Upanishads* and the *srutis*, subsequent to their participation in the *rasa-lila* of Lord Kṛṣṇa, said:

“O, we could not conceive so much, and therefore, could not speak to the public concerning *rasa* of a higher type! Yes, *raso vai sah* is really *anandam*. *Anandam* is of this type: It has got such a play, that we could not understand it so well and therefore, we could not give it to the public. So, we beg forgiveness from You, Our Lord. You are such an inconceivably ecstatic substance. This is the full play of Your joyous pastimes and we could not catch it. We also failed to intimate to the public – the ordinary people – the higher joys of such kind of fulfilment to the extreme. We beg Your forgiveness.”

“We hate the connection of this misconceived, lusty world, which is so nasty.

But these pastimes are so beautiful and so much higher. We find this ecstatic joy includes even the union between man and woman that is hated and eliminated in this misconceived world. We could not understand this, our Lord. What we supplied to the public is a dry thing in comparison with this sort of joyous life.”

Jesus, Prahlada, the Pillars of Faith

If we want to penetrate the deeper understandings of faith – not mere belief – we

must go to the devotees. They are like so many pillars of faith. We are told electricity is everywhere, and there are so many dynamos that can show electric power. Similarly, there are so many devotees past and present with whom we can find real Godliness. They are standing like pillars of faith. If we accept Jesus Christ, then his ideal way of sacrifice will encourage and increase faith in us. So many devotees are there to help us. What sort of devotee is Prahlada? When we come in history to such a life like the great devotee Prahlada, then our heart is fulfilled, “Oh, how great – God is present there.”

In this way, when our attention is toward the devotees, we automatically rise to a particular high standard of faith. When the devotees help us, we are in a safe plane with our attention towards them. So many pillars of faith are standing there and proving that the Lord is existing. The devotees are neglecting the objects of enjoyment and standing with their heads erect to show, to say and to declare that. “There is a Supreme Entity. We have seen Him repeatedly and we have experienced all this.”

Faith in the advanced devotees is a very substantial help to us all, as their position is not flickering. They have a firm position because of their faith in the higher devotees. So, when one has got faith in the elevated devotees, then his faith – his devotion – is of tangible character.

Otherwise, the beginners, they have not much faith in the devotees, but some abstract faith in the Lord. That is not reliable. Devotion comes to a reliable standard when one can find devotion in the devotees and give more importance to them.

Above scripture, the devotees are there and our faith in the devotees is the real way. Faith in the devotees is something tangible to us. In the higher stages, one can trace the Supreme Entity everywhere, in every movement. It is His Sweet Will. When the middle things – the barriers within that give opposition – are gone, then direct connection with the Supreme Entity fully awakens.

The Tangible Causal Attraction

Sometimes the Lord likes to play hide-and-seek with the devotees. Sometimes He comes clear and sometimes He is vague. Whenever He is vague, the devotees begin to cry, “Where are You, my Lord? I don’t feel You, I cannot see You. How can I continue my life? How can I live without You? You are so charming, so

joyous, so fulfilling that I cannot live without Your connection.”

In this way, the devotees begin to wail and cry when He appears vague to them.

Everything is depending on the Lord’s Sweet Will. If we want to trace the cause, then we shall find this is the cause of something, and that is the cause of the cause. Then we shall think, “Oh, this is the final substance, the Reality we are searching after. The whole world is searching after this beauty and charm of the Lord.”

There is a song, “O Mountain! O Himalaya! O Alps! O Sumeru! What are you searching for with your heads erect? Have you seen the creator of this world?

Have you attained the fulfilment of your life? Have you seen Him?” In this way, a devotee feels – in his heart of hearts – that everything is searching for Krsna, God, who is the complete fulfilment of life.

In this world of life and death, there is nothing tangible to attract our attention.

In this phenomenal world, our inner heart searches after something eternal.

There is *sat* – Eternal Consciousness; *cit* – satisfying our search for knowledge of Him; and *anandam* – satisfying our hankering for beauty and love. Love is the fulfilment of life. We shall be able to understand that when love awakens in the heart and the function of the brain is gone away. This is a peculiar and particular phase of life. Wherever we may be, we are automatically searching, searching, and searching for that big “Yes” – “Om”.

“Om” means a big “Yes”. Whatever you are searching for, it exists. What your inner heart hankers after, that exists and is existing. Whatever apparently you see, you must go to the inner substance – the Super-subject. The Lord of your search is there. From *Omkara* comes *Gayatri*, next comes the *Vedas*, and then the *Vedanta*. Lastly, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* descends to give a description of the ecstatic side, the joyful side of the Lord.

The Infinite Lord comes so close to the finite that the finite thinks, “He is one of us.” He plays the part of such nearness – a near friend to us – so much so that we think, “He is one of us.” This is the Lord’s highest grace and kindness towards us. Our highest attainment is also there in His Divine Abode, Vrndavana.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told us, “Eliminate all other conceptions and make haste to that Vrndavana Lord – Sri Krsna. He is *Svayam Bhagavan* – God of Gods, Lord of Lords. He is the source of so many majestic displays of His supernatural powers.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu explained it succinctly, “Search for Sri Krsna! There is no other alternative, no other duty in this world except what I say, ‘Search for Sri Krsna!’ Take His Holy Name, and talk about Him. Whatever you do, connect with Krsna Consciousness and go on with faith and firm determination. You will get your fulfilment of life very shortly.”

So, go on taking His Holy Name, while searching or talking, whether you are sleeping, eating, walking or quarrelling. Whatever you are doing, connect with Krsna and go on making progress. Sincere search is necessary for the aspiring devotee so that his Krsna conception may not be only a sham – a hypocritical endeavour. And you will get help in that direction from the real devotees.

Evaporating Realities

Anyhow, go on searching for Krsna with the help of the devotees, the scriptures and all sincerity within you. Whomever you meet with, talk about Krsna, and do not invite the prey of death – children, wife, money and everything else may evaporate the next moment. Do not think anymore about them. Sincerely searching for Krsna is the eternal joy in every step of your life. Krsna is not your concoction.

The source is the saints and scriptures, and not this mundane world of enjoyment. Neither through abhorrence or renunciation will you find Krsna.

Krsna is the positive inquiry in the heart of the devotees. Those who are carried by the charm of this external world cannot understand what is their inner requirement. They are unfortunate. So, the main conclusion is to keep company with the devotees who have got real faith in Krsna. It is very, very rare in this world to find such devotees. If we want the help of that association, then you are to keep this ideal on the crown of your head.

sadhu-sanga, sadhu-sanga, sarva sastre kaya

lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva siddhi haya

“If properly utilized, a moment’s association with the completely surrendered devotees is sufficient for your highest attainment. If one moment can be properly used, sufficiently used, then there is no necessity of long, long life. Only a point in time is sufficient to solve the whole problem of life if it is properly used in association with the devotees, the agents of Krsna. We shall try to associate with them at all costs. What is the necessity of ages and ages of living a long, long life if we are unconscious of our own self-interest? One moment with the agents of Krsna, if properly utilized, is sufficient to solve the whole problem of our life for which we are eternally wandering about for millenniums. We must be wakeful to our interest. We must not be negligent, but wakeful – to our own self-interest.”

You are a Foreigner to your own heart

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to tell us what is our real interest within. “You do not want to know your own heart. You do not know. You are a foreigner to your own heart and its demand. Faith in the devotees is the wealth within your heart – try to find that ‘Hidden Treasure’.” That was the direction of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. “It is all within you. You are to eliminate all foreign things, then within your heart you will find a Temple of Krsna. Your heart within is a Temple of Krsna. Search your own heart with the help of a proper guide and you will find Krsna there. A proper guide is not a foreign substance to you.

Every heart is a temple of the Lord. It is your inner wealth. It is your Home –

‘Back to God, back to Home.’”

The Super-subject, the Over-soul, descends to reveal Himself to the jiva soul.

The jiva soul perceives the higher, heretofore inconceivable experience – within his consciousness. As the Super-subject withdraws Himself, the *jiva* is left with only the recollection of that experience. When this happens repeatedly, this constitutes the ontological development of faith in that Super-subjective Existential World.

Chapter 2 Somehow Connect with The Infinite

In the beginning, when I went to the Gaudiya Math, the *murti* – the Deity of Mahaprabhu – was there in another room. I asked, “this *murti* is made of what substance, earth or wood?” The devotee attending the Deity told me, “He is Mahaprabhu Himself. Do not try to see wood, earth or anything else.

Mahaprabhu Himself is present there.”

So, I questioned them further, “If Mahaprabhu Himself is there, then why is your Guru Maharaja – who is the greatest devotee – upstairs in another room? If Mahaprabhu Himself would have been present here, then whoever is the highest devotee amongst you should have stayed at His side. But he is staying upstairs in another room and Mahaprabhu is placed in a separate room near the street where everyone can see Him easily. Why your Guru Maharaj is not here by His side if He is Mahaprabhu Himself?”

They replied, “He is also at the side of Mahaprabhu in his heart.” That is the higher conception, a more real conception of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu’s presence is here and also in his heart. This is a higher conception of Mahaprabhu than the Deity conception. He is always enjoying the presence of Mahaprabhu in his heart. Such a devotee is of a higher type.

So, Krsna Consciousness, God Consciousness is like that. It is *cinmaya* – it is conscious and spiritual. The Lord has manifested Himself in this mundane plane of our sense experience for our benefit. He is not to be neglected. However, this conception, this presence of His grace, is considered to be for the lower section.

Yet the Deity should not be considered as an idol. The Deity is also His presence manifested for our gross senses. However, a devotee always sees all things connected to the Lord, the Centre.

archayam eva haraye pujam yah sraddhayehate

na tad-bhaktesu canyesu sa bhaktah prakrtah smrtah

(Srimad Bhagatavam 11.2.47)

“When we do not learn to appreciate the presence of the Lord in the heart of His devotees, but only confine ourselves to such symbols connected with Him, our standard of devotion is meagre.”

Trace the Causal Existence of Everything

We cannot eliminate the plane of affection and love that we find here and there scattered in different ways. We are to trace the causal existence of everything.

What is the unity in the background that is really harmonizing all these scattered experiences? One whose consciousness is raised to such a standard can see the background of everything as one, from One Centre. All these creations are handled, controlled and managed from One Centre. “Wherever he goes, he is always with My connection. I am not lost to him.” In *Srimad Bhagavatam* it is said:

sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavam atmanah

bhutani bhagavatya atmany esa bhagavatottamah

(Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.45)

“One who can see everywhere the connection of the Centre in the background, sees all things correctly. He sees the cause, the connection, the central position, the background, and also his own relationship to the Whole in that position.”

Three Elements in any Experience

In any particular experience, there are three things: The Deepest Root (Sri Krsna), the Seer’s connection (*Sri Guru*), and that which is having the experience of his connection (*jivatma*). This is in accordance to his position with the Centre and it is also interdependent on his adjustment with that environment.

That adjustment is concomitant with his relationship to the Centre. Everything will be considered in relation to the position and desires of the Centre, and not any independent transaction with part and part. It is from the part to the Whole, and from the Whole to the part.

‘What will be my position, my relationship to this part?’ It must be calculated through the Centre, and that will be real. This relationship of “I and he,” is considered a misconception. This misconception will not remain, as it is unreal.

But if it comes through the Centre, then it will be real and we will not be

frustrated or disappointed. This sort of measurement or estimation would be one of substance. The part-to-part relationship is unstable. It is truly unreliable and will not remain. However, the connection that comes through the Centre is substantial, real and will not frustrate us.

Sambandha-jnana

Philosophy in India means *darsan* – allow me to see, allow me to experience things – What is what? Our superficial estimation is not the whole conception.

We should learn to see things and to know things properly. This is *sambandha-jnana*. What is our position in our environment? Is the environment real? Why?

Is it only our eye experience, ear experience or, something more is in the background – behind everything? How can that be understood – only by our reason? ... Never!

Applying our reason to understand the Infinite is futile. Then, how can He be known? The Infinite is not – cannot be by definition – the object of our experience, our inspection. He is far above that. He has got His own responsibility to make known to us His position as the controller of the whole.

He sends His agents and His announcements to make us understand that our creation, our sustenance and our destruction is being controlled by Him. We shall try to meet with Him and attain some understanding with that superior power about our own goal of life.

athato brahma jijnasa

(*Vedanta-sutra, Uttara-mimamsa*)

Inquire about the place where you are living. This inquiry must be extensive – not superficial. It should be real. Wherever you are, inquire into your environment, not superficially, but with real attention to understand where you are and who you are. Who is above you? Who is lower than you? Study all these things. This will really be beneficial to your own interest. Otherwise, all your attempts will be useless and perishable. Your treachery is to your own self. The way you are living, that is a treacherous life – towards your own self. Therefore, try to understand things clearly, what is what and then live accordingly.

Ordinary persons cannot give up their livelihood – their everyday duties and necessities – so they miss the association of the higher agents in their daily activities. In daily life, so many duties must be discharged, so many necessities are there for us to procure and so, that is mixed – not unalloyed. Therefore,

“Give up these duties and make exclusive inquiry about the environment and its relationship to one’s self. This is *jnana*.

Jnana-sunya-bhakti

In the third plane, the practical life in connection with that Infinite is possible. In connection with the Infinite, there is also such a life – so many duties – and that is mixed with the central interest – the deepest interest. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti* means, “Pursuance and maintenance of duties connecting us with the Centre.”

This is in the eternal position. No death can remove us from there because that is in connection with the Centre. When we are doing some duty, no death can challenge that eternal conduct. In other words, there is the plane of service, and the plane of exploitation, or enjoyment. In the middle is the plane of renunciation, the abscissa – no man’s land – the border of the two planes, *brahman* and *viraja*.

We are to study these details. There are five stages:

1. The stage of inquiry
2. The stage of admission
3. The stage of temporary duty
4. The stage of being established in one’s own post of service and then 5. The stage of being harmonized totally with the Centre.

These five stages are again subdivided. They pass through inquiry in eternal life:

1. *Sraddha* – faith
2. Our association with those who are expert in that plane, *sadhu-sanga*

3. Whatever duties are recommended by Him we are to go on doing, *bhajana-kriya*

4. The undesirable things are eliminated wholly – *anartha-nivrtti*

5. We get our continued position in divine life.

We then experience the real worth and attraction for that sort of spiritual life, then so many symptoms of divine life descend in our own existence. Gradually, we shall merge into the interest of God and find our true self there in His relationship.

Faith is so real that Christ left this life, finished this life playfully, totally forgetful of the interests of this life. Socrates also gave his life for faith. So, faith is something much more substantial than our fleeting desires in the lower life.

We are running towards plurality, so many separate interests, many thousands of things are not necessary. Therefore engage yourself with the One, connect yourself with the One Centre. Thereafter, no more running hither and thither to connect with the unwholesome appeal of this world. The One is sufficient.

Connect with the One Centre, try to find the Centre of All-Knowledge.

By knowing Him, we can know everything

When we understand the particular laws of mathematics, then so many sums are automatically done. So, if we get the law – the basic formula in our own hands – then, we have got everything. What is apparently impossible becomes possible.

We are to connect ourselves with this sort of understanding – this is the domain of faith proper. When we connect with the All-controlling Central Point, then we shall be able to know everything that is necessary. If we go to the higher office, then from there we can gather everything about the branch offices. So, inquire about that substance.

If we get information from the Centre, then we have information from all the different sub-offices and branches. All the branches are “controlled” by the All-Controlling Centre. Therefore, we are to connect ourselves with that Centre. We have this necessity: “By knowing Him, we can know everything, by obtaining Him, we can obtain everything.” We will go directly to the Centre. This is

the direction – the path to trod – and it is possible. He who thinks it is possible and engages himself in this pursuit – he is *sraddhavan*. Such a devotee has got sound faith, *sraddha*. Then his inquisitiveness (of the intellect) is satisfied. The whole substantial, practical life he will also find fully present there; it is not imagination.

Mahaprabhu came to give not only theoretical solutions, but to help your whole practical life which will also be benefited by knowing, inquiring and understanding this eternal Truth. Your practical life at every point will find its fullest satisfaction – if you inquire on the basis of this background. You will be benefited in every detail of your life’s necessity. All your practical necessities that you are not conscious of at present – all will find their fullest satisfaction there. You will have engagement, and you will feel that you are deriving more satisfaction than you could have ever imagined. All your attempts are procuring fulfilment in that plane.

ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-mahadavagni-nirvapanam

sreya-kairava-candrika-vitaranam vidyavadhu-jivanam

anandambudhi-varadhanam prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam

sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri-krsna-sankirtanam

Sri Siksastakam, 1

“You will obtain your fullest satisfaction beyond your most satiated imagination.

You will feel not only in connection with an ocean of joy, but at every step, you will find full enjoyment that is ever new. You will have to experience new fulfilment of life at every moment. Every moment is new fulfilment beyond your estimation and by that fulfilment – by that satisfaction, you will not be the loser. You will not be responsible for any reaction. You will feel you are being purified at every moment. By enjoyment here, you are impure with reaction. But in that process in connection with the Infinite, whatever satisfaction or enjoyment you will experience even though new at every step, will not draw any reaction. You will feel wholesale purification when you do that; you will feel the ecstasy which is drawn only by your dedication.”

Dedication, ecstasy, satisfaction in your search – these things will give you joy –

but that joy will not mix with dirt: it will only purify you. Whatever you learn will only be purifying. It is so noble because the basis is dedication – not exploitation. Cultivation of Krsna Consciousness in its highest stage is such: the more you enjoy, the more you are purified. Such a program Mahaprabhu has recommended to us from *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the last projection of revealed Truth from the great expounder, Sri Vedavyasa.

Chapter 3 The Joy of Self-Abnegation

Everything is to be enjoyed by the Lord. If we can understand this principle of life then it is our duty to taste only what He has already enjoyed. We are to approach divinity – Reality – in this spirit of dedication. If we can practice this habit we can be free from the whole of the illusory potency – *maya*. All our duties should be done in a spirit subservient toward the Centre according to His direction or at even a higher level of understanding according to His own whims.

The autocrat has chalked out a path and I am exclusively following that path. If we do not follow or if we stand still, that is an offence. And if I go in another direction, that is also an offence. We must follow in the footsteps of that Autocrat. The principal way of upper life is to follow in the footsteps of the Autocrat in a serving mood. This is the real path. All our illusions will be conquered if we can only try to accept this principle of life. If we do not try for this, it is an offence even to our own selves. And if we do otherwise, that is also an offence. This is law above all law. And for our own best interests, we must mark this.

Following to the Nearest Millimetre

Follow His footsteps faithfully, as no other law is possible here, because He is actually the Autocrat. We shall not be the losers because He is a sweet and loving Autocrat. He is the Autocrat but He is sweet. And you will also get sweetness, fulfilment and love by following in the footsteps of that Autocrat.

Beauty is the Autocrat; Sweetness is the Autocrat; Love is the Autocrat – and that is beyond All-Law. We are required by that dynamic character to follow in those footsteps everywhere – to the nearest millimetre!

This is the summary of the All-Serving Principle coming from the lotus mouth of Sri Uddhava, considered the greatest devotee according to the consideration of Sri Krsna Himself. Of course, Uddhava admires the *gopis*' love for the Lord, but more risk is there in that kind of Divine Love. Their opposition to the sweetness also becomes service in such positions where the servants are crossing the realm of their master. Service, the All-Serving Principle, has got such a position! Service reaches such a stage of nearness that even the Autocrat comes down to His devotees. Such risky service is possible.

ajnayaivam gunan dosan, mayadistan api svakan

dharman santyajya yah sarvan, mam bhajeta sa ca sattamah

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.11.32

“In society, one must obey the law. But there is also the possibility of crossing the law to show faithfulness to the king. If one risks his life and reputation in crossing the general law, and thereby enters into the Royal Chambers to fight with an assassin, then he will be considered the best and most loyal servitor.

Similarly, the Lord is saying, “I have already ordered in the Scriptures, ‘Do this and you shall be promoted. If, by crossing My previous orders on a particular level, one follows My footsteps, then he is sure to be promoted.’”

We shall then find no charm for the temptations that are around us. Our intuition

– our far-sightedness – will say to us, “do not follow these travelling phenomenal proposals. They are not reliable, but treacherous. They are like black market dealings with some self-interest for profit and gain – trying to get more than the real market price for a commodity. These proposals will be detrimental for your progressive march towards Divinity. Do not allow yourself to be captivated by these external charms – they are treacherous exhibitions.

Only take the prasadam which is enjoyed by the Lord.” Everything should be done with this idea in mind, and this will fully relieve us.

Help beyond our Wildest Expectations

Whatever you do, whether in dress or in food, you are to act according to what is sanctioned by Him – following in His footsteps. We shall always perform

everything in that consciousness – in God consciousness or Krsna Consciousness. God is Beauty and He is the Autocrat. Whatever our engagement, we shall perform with the help of Krsna Consciousness in our heart and Divine Help will come to us beyond our wildest expectations. Doing nothing or acting without the proper attitude, the proper consciousness, is considered detrimental.

Whatever you do, you should do in the proper consciousness at every step. You should do everything in a legal way in the highest sense of the term, “legal” which in this instance means He who propounds the law.

We shall do according to His Will, the Will of the Autocrat, Sri Krsna. This is the sum and substance. We are to go on with Krsna Consciousness following at every step in this way. We are to go on eating, sleeping and doing all our duties, but always in the association of Krsna.

Whatever we do must be done in Krsna Consciousness, otherwise all activities are futile.

The author of a particular book once criticized the intellectuals who wrote about Indian philosophy and a comparative study of world religions. His objection was emphatic: “They could not approach the Eastern philosophy by the Eastern method. They approached the Eastern philosophy by the Western method and that is considered to be intellectualism.”

Eastern philosophy’s nature and method of dealing is revolutionary. That author also quoted from the *Bhagavad-Gita* as we generally do, concluding the approach be Eastern – from the subjective to the objective in this case.

Otherwise, it is all the study of reflection and nothing of the substance – the dealings of the shadow. And to think that by getting the shadow you have got the substance – that is self-deception to the extreme. This progress is not upwards.

This progress comes towards the lower side. Progress is not in the empirical method – the ascending method. No. Real progress is in the descending method – coming down from the Autocrat Himself.

They must improve their negative character so that the Positive may come there easily. Pure negative character means taking leave from all aspirations of this mundane existence. It means, “I have no ambition for any mundane

achievement. I am finished with all these worldly ambitions. I am disgusted with mundane achievement. Now I have come to search for something Divine.”

Searching to be Utilized

This then is the first attitude – *pranipatena*. Then *pariprasnena*, inquiry is there but never in a challenging spirit of trusting only in oneself and one’s past experiences. It is not that by taking the past results and thereby assessing the future, we shall be successful - that is not *pariprasnena*. *Pariprasnena* is a very earnest type of hearing with one’s whole self to utilize – at His command. And the main substance is *seva* – “I want to live for Him. I am worthless and I am searching to be utilized by Him. There is absolutely nothing so valuable to me as the direct experience of myself. I have finished my life here tending to fleeting fantasies. My prospect is all finished here as this is all worthless living – to live in this world for this world.” This is an honest enquirer – *pariprasnena*.

“Life is worth living if it can be used by the higher agents. I have come to understand this: Service and acceptance will come from the upper side. This is progress. It does not depend on me that is, it is not under my control. He may or He may not accept me: He may or He may not give me admission. It depends solely on Him. Only some degree of surrender from my side is necessary.”

It is not that I am the subject and as a master, I travel over the soil on this side.

This is all an offence. It also stands as an obstacle to my real progress. I am not going to be master of any particular land or plane of life, but a slave, a kind of servant. It is not that I am giving some service and drawing some salary as if I am in an equal position. No – I am not selling my energy. Service does not mean selling my energy in order to get some remuneration. It is the service of a slave.

I want to put my ego into the fire. The ego is the cause, the root of all disturbances in my life. It must be reduced to ashes and then, a new life will begin.

In a slave conference, will the slaves try to search for some right to their dealings with the master position? This is a laughing matter. It is ridiculous – especially in Krsna Consciousness. It is all autocracy and no law – anarchy. So, this is more difficult to attain. The service is also of this kind. The result of the service I will not accept. I shall accept no salary of any kind. It will all go to my master.

jivera 'svarupa' haya-krsnera 'nitya-dasa

(Chaitanya Charitamrta, Madhya 2.108)

My constitutional position is that I am an eternal slave of the Lord. It is not that I shall get some remuneration by slavery and try to lead a life of independence.

Slave does not mean master or owner of anything. No ownership is allowed there. As much as I shall be accepted as a good slave, I shall find that I have got no ownership in any plane of existence. Ownership, the demand of ownership, the standing of one's ownership – that is the greatest enemy to him – that prospective *bhakta* – on this path.

If I am the owner of something, some knowledge or some substance, then that ownership should be given up. Whatever I hear from the *sadhus*, whatever I shall get – that will go to my master. Service of this nature becomes *bhakti*, devotion. All the nine processes are considered as *bhakti*, devotion, when they have such qualification. The benefit I shall derive from this culture of devotion will not come to me, but will go to my master. This may seem to be something imaginary to us at present, but it should be the basis of our inquiry. Otherwise, we shall add trouble to this mundane world of shadow – without getting any touch of the Reality.

Our Guru Maharaj, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, stressed that he did not like that one will only take the Holy Name, but he wanted that they should also partake in service. A serving attitude must be cultivated within us. The process is to dissolve the worldly ego. The ego is already present there. We do not have to acquire it – only dissolve it. The flow will then come from the higher side and we are fully dependent on that Divine Grace. We have nothing to do as it will come from the higher side. We are only to demand or want that. “I am needy, I am the most needy; I am extremely needy.”

This is what we shall try to accept and understand. This is the nobility of that special teaching of our Guru Maharaja in this age. Through dedication, the Lord will be attracted to you and you will progress by His grace and not – by your energy. “You are possessed by a ghost. That ghost must be driven out. Then, your normal condition will return.

If we are fully dependent on Him, then whatever is necessary will come automatically. This sort of self-abnegation and preparedness of service is

necessary. Whether He is selecting me as a servant or not – that depends on His Sweet Will. “I have nothing to do but only to try and make myself fit for His Grace. I am the worst of all; I am the most needy and worst of all. I am haunted by so many undesirable objects of the senses. So, I am not worthy. I am the poorest of the poor, the neediest of the needy.”

The negative side is our normal position as we are in this organic whole. Your position is something like this. The hair can be divided into a hundred parts and then one part is again divided into a hundred. You should think your position like that in this universe. So, you do not want to lord it over because as a result of that, you are suffering. Give up that current forever. Come to the normal position and again you will find that you are not a master, but you are in a helpless position. Then help from the upper side will come. This is not a hypocritical attitude, but genuinely, sincerely, you will find that you are helpless.

In the name of *bhakti* – devotion – to gather some intellectualism or some mystic power will surely be misguiding to us. If we can trace any progress within us, then we are considered nowhere. These things are not trustworthy in the ordinary sense.

One time, two or three celibate wanted to say something to our Guru Maharaj, but they hesitated. Our Guru Maharaj asked them, reading their attitude, “You want to say something to me, but you hesitate to do so?”

“Yes.”

“You say what you have to say to me.”

They said, “We have done service in the mission for more than twelve years but we don’t find any progress. This is what we came to report to you.”

Then my Guru Maharaj said, “Do you say this rightly, sincerely? Sincerely you say that you have made no progress after ten or twelve years?”

They replied, “Yes, yes, of course we sincerely feel what we say.”

Then he asked again, “But is it that you want to abandon the mission?”

They said, “No, we don’t want that – we couldn’t abandon the mission.”

He then said, “Alright, then you are in a healthy position. Go on continuing your duties.

What should we understand from this? What should we understand in this exchange? Is it very difficult that after ten years of service in this mission, they say that I have got nothing? What benefit can we get from understanding this?

The benefit is, “you are saved from the disease that, ‘I got something. I have got something in my possession’ – this is mania!

Nothing can be got here from our position. Everything is in His control. You should look out for that disease – “I have got something.” But they are telling,

“But still, I have lost so many years in the mission, and also serving without any remuneration. We are giving our energy and we do not get anything in return.”

And our Guru Maharaj – how very peculiar is this? “Selflessly working without any benefit – then, that work keeps me in a good position. Therefore, I ensure that you are healthy and not in a diseased condition. You are in top spiritual health because you are working and getting nothing – still, you are giving your service without any return. You are in a good position and you are in the best of health.”

To say that we have got something – that is dangerous. We must work without any remuneration in return. Can you conceive of that? How? Our real progress is made in that line of conquering the organic Whole, the Autocrat. And His nature of progress is of this kind. So, it is not within the jurisdiction of our satanic intellect. Our intellect means satanic – in opposition to God. We do not want to be a separate god here, like so many different Demigods. *Seva*, only unconditional service will save us. And what do we want? What are we given? –

More tendency to serve.

What is *prema*? What is love? That sacrifice is rewarded by more intense hankering for service. A self-giving attitude that is the remuneration. It will be increased in us more and more. Your serving tendency will be increased. The appreciation of slavery will be increased. If you work as a slave the appreciation of slavery will be more intensely at His disposal.

Self-forgetfulness is of a dynamic character. Self-forgetfulness in totality

demands self-forgetfulness. Then we shall be able to feel the deepest plane, the flow of the deepest plane, that plane of the Autocrat within us. Our present ego will not allow us to go to the deeper plane, the most fundamental plane of the irresistible flow. It is so subtle, so sweet, and we can go, we can reach that destination. Nothing can oppose us. We can attain that fundamental flow. Self-forgetfulness is of such dynamic character!

If particularly we want to look at our progress, then nothing comes within our vision. Whenever we are particular to feel, “What is the consequence of my energizing in this life?” “What is my acquisition after long engagement in a particular duty?” If we want to look for some acquisition or qualification, then we are finished. He loves to come of His own accord. The Lord is not attracted by the qualification of anyone. No qualification is sufficient for Him; in any case, our so-called qualifications are paltry by His standards.

So, “Die to Live”. We are to die a real death; not as a fashion or imitation – No.

Our Ego is really to die. There is no charm in the environment where we live,

only dissatisfaction. There is no friendship with any environment except with the devotees, the agents of a deeper plane who tell us, “We have nothing: we are His property. We may be utilized in any way He likes, taking us to the dignified nobility of our birthright, our human existence. We do not want anything but to be utilized by the Higher if possible. We always feel unfit because of the reaction of our sinful life. However, this process –this path is still recommended for us.

Real shelter

What is faith? We are incomplete without the Lord. The fulfilment of our lives is in the hands of the Absolute. That is faith. Everything is in the hand of the Absolute and we are nowhere. We are helpless, sincerely searching for our real shelter. The environment is all hypocrisy. We want a real shelter, as we are shelter-less. We have nothing to attract the Lord towards us. So, we must not live a hypocritical life. We have no qualification to attract anyone towards us.

Wholesale, we want to be utilized by the Lord. If possible, our energy is to be wholesale thrown at the disposal of some wonderful person who can utilize it.

This is faith proper which releases us from the clutches of Satan. Satan’s self-advertising, self-aggrandizing energy as the anti-god is encouraging more

Satanism in us such as the worldly ego, separatism and independent life.

Satanism, the conception that we are masters, must be fully dissolved and discarded via disassociation.

We are nothing without the connection of that wonderful person. Someone may utilize us – some miraculous person! Some miraculous force may utilize me. We should not seek any separate self-interest that means surrender to Satan – the anti-god.

Everything is accomplished if I can submit to the Centre or Central Power of the Absolute. This means faith, this is called faith. We can make progress towards the Truth by faith and not by any other means, not through the senses, not with the intellect and not with our reason. Nothing can measure that substance except faith. We must ask ourselves, “Am I ready to depend only on that faith?”

In the beginning, we shall have to drive out the misconception of faith, that is, many people will say that, “Faith is superstition. What is faith? It is not something tangible.” Our civilization will accuse us, that we are required to be reduced to nothingness, to no worth – and this cannot have any good in it.

This misconception of faith is blind. It is the worst type of superstition in our present civilization. But faith is such that we are nothing at present. Still, we can be utilized in our proper position: but we are far, far from that sort of position.

The negative side always progresses and the foundation is *sadhu-sanga*, the association of devotees. It becomes possible to select the agents in proper company. In this attitude we can select the divine agents of a higher type. There are different kinds of agents from different conceptions of so-called religion.

According to our faith, we shall select our well-wishers and agents. According to the classification of our faith, we will make progress on that side.

So, faith means deep confidence in the Central Absolute. Our association, our selection of the agents from that eternal source coming to help us, depends on our faith. We are like birds of the same flock – same feather. So, we are to recognize that feather, and then we shall associate with them. Then, dedicated action will begin by that association. He will be the teacher, and we shall be the student. Now the question is, “What kind of faith?”

There is a plane of exploitation, renunciation and dedication – service. The first, exploitation, may be easily eliminated. We are suffering from so many reactions and we can easily become disgusted with this exploitative, “elevationist” mentality. But then, the temptation of complete retirement in the renunciation school is staring us in the face. Many will flock there. “Oh, complete retirement.

This world is not worth living for. We want to retire from here permanently.”

Buddha, Sankara and others will come with their agents to try to take you to that plane of renunciation or retirement. Then, there is the plane of dedicated life. I want to live, but not to renounce nor to exploit. Exploitation means to give pain to others. But I want to live without giving any pain to others, without any reaction. Dedication means self-sacrifice.

Then, the question will come to give oneself to others. We shall try to give without taking, and this is safe when it has got connection with the Centre Who is the designer and destines everything. The connection with Him will then be something substantial. Otherwise, all is futile with no position at all. But in this way we are carried by that designer Whose destiny resides in that conception of Autocracy as Krsna. We shall then gradually see only love, affection and beauty present in the Autocrat and nothing else.

He is a charmer who can charm by His beauty and by His behaviour. He is the only Absolute Autocrat – Affection, Love, Beauty, Harmony and Sweetness is the Autocrat.

If we can find Him in this way then we shall go to His side, but the process of going also depends on Him. Selection will come from Him as we are nowhere, we are helpless. We are to increase our helplessness so much so that His agents will be attracted. They will come to recommend us. This will be substantial.

We will always be conscious that we cannot be masters of this land of exploitation. We are fully dependent on the Lord. If anything is given to us for food, we shall take it, otherwise not. Such sort of surrendered life is most desirable – that much self-giving is desirable. Then, we are given hope and inspiration that the Centre is of such high quality.

The *Brahma-Samhita* will come and say, “The land is touchstone, *cintamani*.

The *vrksas*, the trees, are wish-fulfilling entities. Who are the inhabitants? Their movement means dancing, their speaking means singing – such a land is there.

We may be accepted, recruited for that plane of life according to the degree of our surrender. This sort of sacrifice is a peculiar, unconditional sacrifice and does not come under any kind of calculation.

Our faith is not within calculation but is emphatically in the Infinite sweetness of our Lord. We are to know the Infinite in that beautiful land where the Absolute Autocrat plays according to His own sweet whims. So, be prepared for extreme self-sacrifice and self-abnegation. This is done through service –a serving attitude and our self-giving. We shall not be attracted by some ambitious life with ambitious ideals. No! Rather, we shall try to give ourselves totally for His fullest satisfaction. This will be the perfection of all our endeavours.

Chapter 4 The Panacea

Ill fated are those who are very eager to find fault in others and do not have any time to find fault in themselves. Also, the other side of your necessity is not to find defects but find attributes in others. Why do you allow yourself to engage in the position of finding fault? There is ample place to find goodness in the devotees. Why are you not engaging yourself in that association?

Why the tendency to find fault in others? May there be a more faulty person than yourself? Why do you engage yourself only to see the lower rather than fix yourself to the higher? Upon doing so, you will find that the devotees are of higher quality than yourself. Why not attend that section? Why, unfortunately, do you go to the lower section with your attention to find fault? On one side, there are beautiful flowers – on the other side is rubbish. Why do you inspect the rubbish instead of all the beautiful flowers?

You yourself stand in the witness box. You are the criminal. You are the culprit.

Why should you look at the rubbish when so many beautiful flowers are there?

You see injustices but you do not see justice? Why not merge to the positive

portion. If one hand is working and another is paralyzed, then giving no attention to the working hand, shall I only attend to the diseased part? I must care for the paralyzed hand surely, but what already has full capacity, I must also utilize that. Why you are always looking towards feeling the pain of the diseased part and continuously preaching this, ignoring the healthy parts?

On one side there is good – God is there. Why do you go to Satan only to keep company with satanic persons while there are godly persons? Why not to God's side? On one side there is heaven and on the other side, there is hell. God has no fault; yet by the fault of Satan, we must suffer? That reasoning has got no logic.

You are suffering from your own misdeeds – that is the real logic. Neither God nor Satan is responsible for that. Therefore, concentrate on your own self, pray to the Lord and try to keep aloof from Satan.

You are holding a marginal position. Your limited free will is your capital. You should always utilize that towards the Godly side, taking one away from the satanic side. This limited capital that you have, you are to begin your business with that. But you think, when you get a good capital, then you will begin business? This is imagination! Whatever little capital I have got, I shall start my business with that. My attention, my energy will help me in the future.”

The Best Benefit

A man has an accident in the journey and he loses consciousness. But, when a little consciousness is regained, what should he do? He will utilize that consciousness directing; “Take this body to my guardians, my home is there. Oh my friend, carry my body to my home.”

This will be the best benefit of that limited consciousness which returned to the man – he was able to use his good knowledge. An intelligent man will consider that whoever will take care of this body with care and affection is the best prospect for its rehabilitation. Therefore, he shall request to place this body under their care.

So, whatever awakening we have in consciousness, we shall utilize that by placing ourselves in the care of Godly persons; only then there is value of devotion to God. Those who know the value of devotion to God, they are our near relations. They will appreciate this inner awakening, and they will take care of my devotional self. This is the penultimate benefit of *sadhu-sanga*: when

medicine or our own attempts cannot heal us, the doctor advises us to make a change. Then the air and the water will naturally come to help improve our health. So, also, the atmosphere of saintly persons improves our spiritual health.

Anyway, to always remain in the company of devotees in the same *sampradaya*

– the same line – but superior devotees, by taking the lower position. Such association is most desirable for any person aspiring to progress spiritually.

The Real Meaning of *sadhu-sanga*

Srila Rupa Goswami has given the gist of the advice in *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*:

“We are to associate with those superior to us, but in the same line of the Gaudiya Vaisnava devotees in Krsna Consciousness. They also carry the same conception of the spiritual Truth, but superior to me. If I engage myself even as a sweeper in that camp, it will be highly valuable for my future spiritual life.”

Who is responsible if you look to see injustice? You are held responsible. What is bad, that is your share. You are to take the whole responsibility of misdeed in your hand. If you cannot feel this then you are insincere, not only you but everyone. Your free will is responsible for all misdeeds and misguided circumstances in the environment. This is the first principle of spiritual life.

What is bad in me, I am responsible for that. You are responsible for seeing, for coming in connection with that vision. There are also good dealings in another sphere. Why have you come to see this misjudgement and mistreatment of so many who are quarrelling with each other? There are so many good dealings and you have not acquired a position to remain in that layer? Then why? “I am responsible for all the undesirable things in me – that is a fact. My weak free will has taken me down into this present undesirable environment and no one else is responsible.”

This fact you are to realize. If you ignore this, then you are in *maya* – misconception, illusion. When you sincerely realize this position, then your dark days will come to an end. When you feel that only you yourself are responsible for all these miserable things, then good days will awaken for you. This is the fact. It is not only a conception to achieve some end. It is not an imaginary conception to take help of in order to get out of the present condition. It is not like that; it is a fact, it is for everyone whether good or bad – he is responsible.

Neither God nor Satan is responsible.

There are two sides; good and bad. We are responsible for the freedom that is given to us. God is not responsible for the fall of Adam and Eve into this world.

Satan was present and he was trying to entice her. Why shall we accept the advice of Satan which is to take fruit from the tree of knowledge? This is the result of a loss of faith in God. This is a fall from the stage of surrender to God.

This is a misuse of our own valuable free will. Then the result is, we have to come to this world and eat by the sweat of our brow, by our own labour –

“Labour and Live”.

Before, when we were in a surrendered position, God was feeding everyone of us. We cannot underestimate the circumstances. In a rich country, anyone born is maintained by the state. So, in the state of God, everyone is being maintained.

Otherwise, when he takes charge of his own decision by his small faculty, then by the advice of Satan, he comes to take the fruit of “The Tree of Knowledge”, in order to exercise his own free will by coming down from the stage of surrender. It cannot be more clear. he misuses his freedom and comes to this world to labour and live in action and reaction.

Vulnerability, weakness, independence and a paucity of free will is the cause to be traced. Neither God nor Satan can be hold responsible or accountable for the fall of the soul. If we do not follow the advices of Satan, then we shall not fall.

But to accept the advice of Satan depends on our free will and when free will is misused, we commit colossal mistakes. The soul subsequently has to fall down to this material world – leaving heaven. The responsibility is with the free will that is vulnerable, weak and paltry due to not having full freedom. The smallest part of freedom we own, and by its misuse we come to this calculating world of action and reaction – labour and live.

When we maintain our position in heaven where God is All-in-All – where we are His servants – then there is no sin and, no fear. The root possibility of fear comes from the association of a secondary cause. In heaven, all is harmonized and controlled by God. “I am there; I am His; I belong to Him; everything for Himself.” As long as I live in that atmosphere – “Everything for Sri Hari!” –

then I am safe. But when I deviate from that consciousness – separate in interest from the common interest of God – then I shall have to come into this world of action and reaction. No one else is responsible for our displeasures. The environment is not responsible; you have acquired that. And any calculated plan to protect yourself against reactions of your own doing is also an implication involving more reaction.

If suddenly I find myself in the prison house, then who is responsible? There are so many culprits, so many deceitful persons, so many thieves in the prison house. If I find myself in the midst of them, then who is responsible? I have acquired that position. There is also heavenly association but instead of that, “Why am I put in the prison house where, wherever I look I see culprits. Why am I here? Why am I not with heavenly association? Who is responsible? Who?”

The Panacea

In this way, I am to try and understand that I am responsible for being there.

First, there must be the diagnosis, then the treatment and nursing. Nursing and treatment is good, but it must follow the diagnosis. The diagnosis is, “I am the culprit!” and the medicines must be applied accordingly. A thorough cure and not a patch-job is what will be advantageous. Then the thorough, wholesale treatment is like this:

bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam

(Srimad Bhagavatam 10.14.8)

This is the magical cure for fault-finding. *Srimad Bhagavatam* recommends the system of a magical cure – this is the diagnosis proper. Preaching must be on the basis of this truth. Otherwise, all is haphazard. The *Srimad Bhagavatam*’s preaching is like this – deep penetration to the root cause of the disease.

Do the *Vedas* advocate a dreamless sleep induced by renunciation? That is not the conclusion accepted by the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* has accepted the wholesome organic life. It is unavoidable that we have to live with some particular paraphernalia. Complete retirement entering into *Samadhi* or dreamless sleep is also not the conclusion of life. That is a temporary arrangement. But, permanent adjustment must be for Him. Everything is for

Him.

“I am for Him and not for myself. He is also holy, so accommodating and so good. I am for Him and that is my best prospect. My best prospect is with Him – the Absolute Good, the Organic Whole, and I cannot leave that. I cannot look after my separate goals. My goal must be part of the Whole – such adjustment is necessary. So, if I am to live in a holy atmosphere, in an organic environment, then I shall always be cautious and careful to detect my own fault.”

The Basis of Dedication

Neither exploitation nor renunciation can give permanent solution – but “dedication” will. The basis of dedication is that the eye is not faulty:
karmany evadhikaras te ma phalesu kadacana

ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma te sango ‘stv akarmani

(Bhagavad-gita 2.47)

“The whole of your attention must be towards the discharge of your own duty without caring for the environment. That is in My command. I am to look after that. You must give your whole attention to the discharge of your own duty.”

And, if all the units are wholly connected to discharge their own duty, then it will be heavenly. But when we would rather find fault with the environment –

“They are thieves” and I shall also become a thief should that be the conclusion?

Everything here is undesirable. I may not even know the extent of undesirability in me. There are many things underground and they will gradually come to the surface. I shall then find, “Oh! All these undesirables are in me?” They must go out and then the real gems will come forth. The gold should be cast into the fire.

When the alloy portion vanishes then the real gold will be visible. Now at present our condition is that this pure gold – it is mixed with some alloy.

So, “Die to Live” – throw yourself into the fire. Your so-called ego at present is mixed with alloy and that alloy must be destroyed by the fire of suffering – fire means suffering – and the golden gems will then come out. Alloy is not a part of your body nor your soul – it is acquired. The inner soul’s *svarupa* will then come

forth. So, if you want to live a real proper, noble and holy life, then what you think you are at present – that must die.

And preaching will be part of your adjustment. If this environment is not suitable, then I shall try another environment that may be more suitable to me.

That is a small thing. But the main line is what I say and the small partial adjustment may vary differently from place to place. Anyhow, the main line must be – “No complaints against the environment”. A bad workman quarrels with his stool; the origin is the workman. So, there is no benefit in quarrelling over the effect. That was food and in his association, it became stool.

So, shall we preach against the injustices of the environment? Never. What is necessary you will feel from within – not as a pleasure but as a duty – and only if it comes from above, i.e., if you find some inspiration for the cause of the higher conception, and not for your personal cause. If you go to criticize for your personal interest, then that fault will come back to you. It will enter into you. But if for purification, and not out of envy, you seek help from the higher, then you will be purified. Otherwise, you may find yourself in the same position the next moment. “I am vulnerable. What I am criticizing to be so bad, the next moment I may be left in such a deplorable position. I do not know the ways of the Infinite environment. I am a doll playing in the hands of the Infinite.

“In the next moment, from human birth, I may have to go to a dog’s birth, a cat’s birth or an insect’s birth. They are descending into the mental system.”

So, don’t go to criticize. Don’t be hungry to find the fault of others. But if someone finds fault in you, then you may consult a higher authority – a more senior Vaisnava: “There have been some complaints against me. Whether or not they are valid, I don’t know. Please, can you help me to understand my defects?”

– Such an enquiry has no enviousness, no spirit of competition that I am good and he is bad: it is devoid of mischievous motives underground. Only it must be endowed with *pariprasnena* – honest enquiry. Otherwise I shall have to suffer.

So, “Physician, cure thyself,” before you attempt to cure others. This is your primary duty; then you will really be able to offer others a cure-all.

In conclusion, my advice is that you should try to be submissive to the Vaisnava devotees. Submissiveness to them will promote your spiritual merit. We shall

also pray to the Supreme Lord for such an attitude, “Oh Lord, my bad temperament stands in the way of my association with the devotees – please remove it.”

The association with the devotees of the Lord is a primary necessity. It vastly improves our position with the Supreme if we always remain in prayer:

“Oh my Lord. This bad temperament in me, this inconsiderate thinking and feeling – sentiments concerning the outer world – this is disturbing my association with the higher Vaisnava devotees. They are the real source of improving our own inner wealth. So, please purify me by dismissing all these tendencies in my mind which the devotee section does not adore.”

We shall always try to be in such a position that the servants of the Lord will like our company and service. They would utilize me for this is my primal necessity.

If they do not like my presence due to some contaminating disease or something, then it will be a loss to my spiritual life. So, we shall have to repent.

mat-tulyo nasti papatma, naparadhi ca kascana

parihare ‘pi lajja me, kim bruve purusottama

Bhakti rasamrita sindhu 1.2.154

“If we slip and fall on the ground, then the ground is the only help by which we can stand erect; so we cannot leave the ground.”

We shall sincerely pray, “Oh Lord, I am committing a mistake by disregarding You, ignoring You. I have no other alternative to get out of this disadvantage except by your help. I cannot correct myself. Under no condition can I leave you my Lord. If I commit mistake against You, an offence against You, still, only by Your help can I be purified. I have no other alternative. So, please forgive me and help me so that I may be saved by Your most intimate associates. It is so, because without their grace I may not be able to enter Your domain of Divine Love. It is only through the devotees that I may go. I have no other alternative.

There are so many agents. If I am disappointed by one agent, then I may try another in a mild temperament – without speaking much against that previous party.”

It is better that we consider ourselves to be faulty. To put blame on another's shoulder – that is ultimately not considered to be very happy or valuable. We should try and learn to blame ourselves. What is coming from outside I have no concern. The Lord can see and He sees everything. He is seeing who is responsible. But, I won't try to put the blame on others' shoulders. It will not be fruitful.

I shall gain if I can find fault within myself and not complain to others about the environment. The environment should be considered to be within His jurisdiction and it is really so. I am concerned with seeing the defect in myself only. If I attain success, I shall try to attribute it to others – to the grace of the devotees. If any failure, then I shall try to find the cause within myself. Through this process, we can make real valuable progress and that is the most universal process of progress – to find fault with our own selves. I am responsible for this disgraceful condition, but if there is any good, then that is coming from Him. He is All-Good, He is watching the environment and is in full control. So, this is included in Him, in God's party. One party, myself; another party, God's. He controls everyone and He is conscious of their activities.

This position would be very advisable. If without looking at the fault of others, I can search myself and find out that the fault is within me and not with them, then this is the key to success in spiritual life. *Srimad Bhagavatam* has advised us to go on this way. You will thrive, but when you are finding fault with others, then you will become a loser. This *sloka* from *Srimad Bhagavatam* is very effective, very true and safe in all respects. It is also His Grace to be able to see that the environment is always helpful to you – even in punishment. When the Mother is punishing the child, it is from the guardian's side – but it is for the good of the child.

So, on the whole, the Lord and His paraphernalia are not vindictive. Yet the punishment comes – to correct you. They are fully aware of your defects and your real interest. They are All-Affectionate. You are responsible. In this process, in time you will be purified to the highest degree. So, don't go to quarrel with the environment. That environment which you are presently facing, is a product of your own *karma*. You have acquired such environment according to your *karma*. So, the environment is produced by your own action. You cannot lodge any complaint against that as you yourself are responsible. This is true. If you can accept such a truth in your *sadhana* in this life, then in no time at all you shall prosper because Divine Grace will be attracted most intensely towards you.

*om tad visno paramam padam sada,
pasyanti surayo diviva caksur-atatam
tad vipraso vipanyavo jagrvamsah,
samindhate visnor yat paramam padam*

Rig Veda 1.22.20

“His vigilant eye, like the sun, is seeing everything and He is omniscient. His presiding guardian-eye over our heads is always looking for us.”

We shall be able to draw His Sweet attention – His Divine Grace – towards us very soon if we take this miraculous process of seeing the defect within us –blaming ourselves and not the outside environment.

Chapter 5 Cheap Imitations versus Exclusive Devotion

Once we heard that Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur was chanting the Holy Name and wandering in the sky according to his own sweet will. Suddenly he found that he was just near *Yamalaya*, where Yamaraja, the Lord of Death holds court to judge the sinners of this world. Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur also found present there Lord Brahma, Narada and others, discussing the meaning of two *slokas* spoken by Sri Krsna in the *Bhagavad-gita*, but they could not find any solution.

*api cet suduracaro bhajate mam ananya bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah*

Bhagavad-gita 9.30

“One who has devoted himself exclusively to Me, if he does any mischievous actions – sins – he should still be accepted. He should be judged as a righteous man, as honest as any other person. Although externally a person may commit many crimes, if he is exclusively given to My devotion, then he should be considered pure and spotless. He should be considered a saint. Whatever he does, he is doing cent-per-cent rightly.”

ksipram bhavati dharmatma sasvac-chantim nigacchati

kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati

Bhagavad-gita 9.31

“Very soon he will become religious and will acquire real peace in his life. O son of Kunti, go and declare this to the public with firm determination. You may promise and give a guarantee to the public that My devotee never meets with destruction – they can never be ruined.”

Yamaraja, Brahma and others could not find a solution to this point.

sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja

Bhagavad-gita 18.66

“Giving up all sorts of duties, one may come to My feet. This is called *ananya bhajana*. One who has given up all different phases of duties and only accepts duties towards Me is My exclusive devotee.” Now, after such exclusive duty, then he will again be seen as a dutiful man, an externally pious man, a *dharmatma*? This seems to be an anomaly. The meaning of *ananya bhajana* is that he will leave all sorts of duties – pure or impure – and come to My feet.

Then, he will again become very saintly in his activity in the near future? What is the meaning of this?

At that time, they noticed that Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur was moving in the sky and taking the Holy Name of the Lord. They said, “He is a pure devotee – not an ordinary devotee – and he has got deep knowledge of the scriptures. Let him come and explain this verse of *Bhagavad-gita*.”

Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur was invited and went there to give the meaning of the *slokas*. Who will be pious, who is *dharmatma*? He who understands and declares this decision: “that an exclusive devotee of Krsna – whatever his outer practices may be – he is cent per cent saintly. He who understands and utters this principle will become *dharmatma* – he will be pious in the near future. The conclusion should be that he who declares that ‘My exclusive devotee’, despite his ill behaviour, is cent-per-cent saintly and, his statement is also cent-per-cent correct. So such a person will become very pure and very soon, he will also get

the chance of accepting the path towards eternal Truth.”

Sri Krsna said to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gita*, “Take this advantage and go to the public. Declare with boldness that My devotee who is given wholly and exclusively towards Me – if apparently or outwardly he may be doing something wrong – he will never be destroyed. He will be saved, *na me bhaktah pranasyati*- No destruction is possible for My exclusive devotee, his life is insured. Go to the public and declare this and receive the benefit of becoming saintly. You will have the chance of acceptance of the path of spiritual eternal peace. It is so, because they have got that appreciation, that exclusive devotion for Me.”

Everything is for Him and not for any other part. We may obey or disobey the laws of the provincial or separate interest. We may do or may not do, but we must obey the rule: everything is for Him. This is the main rule. All other rules are subsidiary. We may carry on or we may not carry on, but we must carry on our duty towards the centre.

This is the all-important factor in every case. One who can appreciate this and boldly asserts it to the public must have some substantial feeling in the matter.

He is sure to survive to improve his future condition very soon. He will attain the path of eternal peace that is Myself. This is the underlying meaning.

sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja

Bhagavad-gita 18.66

This is the highest quality of every part of the whole. Everyone must be dedicated towards the centre, even crossing his dutifulness in respect to other environments. One who can feel this, appreciate this, and assert this, he will also very soon get such a position because of his inner heart’s appreciation. He has some realization in this path and that will also come to be effected very soon.

The public will see, “Oh! He is also coming to this path of *ananya bhajana*, exclusive adherence towards the call of the Absolute Centre and that is all-inall.”

Dharma means “moral duties to mother, country, society and humanity. But, neglecting all these duties, if one maintains a straight relationship with Me, then he is considered not to be committing any fault. He is in the line of exclusive

devotion towards Me. He is doing rightly. One who can appreciate this, he will also very soon be converted to the same class. This is the verdict, the full meaning. Not only he who is following the exclusive devotional path, but who can appreciate this, he will also gain entrance in the path of exclusive devotion to the Lord. In the beginning of devotional practices, there may be some bad tendencies, but when the devotee matures, then all these different tendencies will automatically disappear. These unwanted tendencies may disappear or may not disappear, but service to the centre is the all-important factor for the devotee.

drstaih svabhava-janitair vapusas ca dosair

na prakrtatvam iha bhata-janasya pasyet

gangambhasam na khalu, budbuda-phena pankair

brahma-dravatvam apagacchati, nira-dharmaih

Sri Upadesamrta 6

Srila Rupa Goswami has given the example, “The Ganges water is sometimes seen to be externally filthy, but it never loses its purifying capacity. The purifying capacity of the Ganges water has got no connection with the external purifying capacity of the Ganges water.”

In the same way, the devotees may have some physical or mental defects.

However, devotee means, ‘the *atma* – the soul’. In the *atma* – the innermost self– there is a purifying agent which is the purest normal factor of the world.

“Whatever externally you may see in My exclusive devotees is like the foam and dirt in the Ganges water. The purifying capacity of the Ganges water cannot be disturbed by any foam or any dirt mixed with the water – that is something separate. The spiritual capacity does not depend in any way on this material, foreign capacity.”

So, some devotees may be seen to be a little greedy and some a little easily excited. Physically, one may be blind, another may be deaf and another may be lame. But these external, apparent defects should not be considered because a devotee’s saintly characteristic is independent of the physical and mental planes.

Extraordinary Exemplary Conduct

In Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's tour of South India, He met Vasudeva Vipra in Kurma Ksetra. He was a leper, but a great devotee. The leper, Vasudeva was also very exemplary in his physical conduct. If any worms fell on the ground from his sores, then he would put the worms back on the sores so they would not die.

He was suffering from leprosy, but he was a devotee cent per cent. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu happily embraced him and his leprosy disappeared.

Also, when Srila Sanatana Goswami was coming back to Puri from Vrndavana, by the contact of bad water in the jungle, he contracted some sores on his body.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu used to welcome him but Sanatana Goswami would push back, "Don't touch me. This is the body of a sinful man with so many itches and sores that are oozing and emitting a bad odour. Don't touch me."

Then one day, Sanatana Goswami disclosed, "I shall leave this place or I shall invite death by falling under the wheel of Lord Jagannath's cart." When Mahaprabhu heard of this He chastised Sanatana and then forcibly embraced him – all the good qualities came out immediately and the sores, etc. disappeared. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told, "Sanatana, you are a Vaisnava.

Your body is not defective."

aprakṛta-deha tomara 'prakṛta' kabhu nayais

"I am a sannyasi. Kṛṣṇa is testing Me to see whether I have got any difference in the discrimination of My dealings with the devotees. Whether I am seeing, 'this sore is here' or 'that defect is there', in the devotee and thereby avoid their company. Kṛṣṇa is testing Me. It is seen only for this purpose. Your body is already pure. Kṛṣṇa has created this situation only to test the public. If I cannot see this, then I will be deceived by Kṛṣṇa. So, it is nothing. It is a show, a mere show. Your body is pure and spotless. You are a Vaisnava, a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is only shown to serve some purpose of the divinity of Kṛṣṇa.

Wherever a devotee's saintly devotion is present, such things cannot stand. Only to test My devotion, Kṛṣṇa has sent you to Me in this condition."

He embraced Srila Sanatana Goswami and showed that he is cent-per-cent devotee.

These circumstances may or may not occur, but still the principle is that our service, our wholesale dutifulness towards Krsna is our primal necessity. In the ordinary sense, the *Gopis* are also considered to be sinners. They are crossing the laws of the society and the scriptures so they are considered sinners.

However, they hold the highest position of purity as a result of their exclusive devotion towards Krsna and no other – even at the risk of repeatedly crossing societal standards of morality. They cannot check themselves due to their extreme hankering to serve Krsna cent-per-cent.

Therefore, the *Gopis* are considered to be in the highest devotional mood. But this sort of devotion is not cheap. Persons of this world may take advantage of these very high ideals, but that will not be beneficial for them. Devotion must be there to a substantial degree. It is not by cheap imitation that anyone will pass in the name of exclusive devotion to the Lord. That is *sahajiya* – imitation – and cannot be allowed.

We should not be too particular about the conduct of other devotees as we lose our own time and energy – and it is also reactionary. “If I try to find fault with anyone, then that same fault will come back to me; and this is especially true in the devotee section. By chewing the poison in his body, that same poison will come back to me.” So we should avoid that and try to find the good qualities in others as that will also be of help to us.

There was a system in our *math* at the time of our Guru Maharaj. Our Guru Maharaj used to order openly in an assembly that one devotee would stand and praise the good qualities of another selected devotee whom he especially did not like. So, he forced the critic to find out where the goodness lies in that devotee whom he did not like. By finding out the good qualities in him, that helped the critic to eliminate the bad things in his conception. He will search after that which is good and thereby, he will be benefited.

There should be no culture of any misconception, especially in the devotees because Krsna has taken full charge of those who are surrendered souls. So whatever is good and bad there in the devotees, it is His responsibility. Any fault or evil in a devotee may disappear at any time or Krsna may continue that

tendency there in order to serve some purpose. We are to see like that. Therefore, we must not go to criticize those who are directly under the charge of Kṛṣṇa or we shall be in great difficulty. We should try to find out what is good in them for that will help us a great deal. This is not a theoretical thing but these are the most practical topics.

Chapter 6 Service is Self-Giving

Learn to give yourself. Learn to die the so-called death – embrace at every second. In this political and social world, everything is done at the cost of life. In every duty, at every step, they are ready to give up their lives for that “do or die” conception. If one accepts such a principle of life, he is sure to progress. And his progress will be very, very intense. “Do or Die” – you are to live with such an attitude. At every point, you are ready to do anything at the cost of your life. You will be a great success if you serve with this spirit at heart. When you are approaching that special spiritual substance, that high spiritual life, then you are to invite death at every point of your life. The most intense desire to give yourself is ‘do or die’ at every point in giving your life. The guarantee is, “I shall attain that or I shall die.”

You are to approach the Divine Sound, the Holy Name, with this spirit of self-giving. “No giving, no getting; no risk, no gain.” If you want to give with such intensified nature, then you will be adored as a candidate, a bona fide candidate of that spiritual world. So, self-giving is necessary. Service means self-giving, self-dedication. That should be our attitude to approach the higher plane. Then, all the coatings of the material ego will vanish one by one, and the genuine substance from within will come out and select its own soil. “This is my home, this is my sweet home.”

So many coverings are causing deviation in different directions. These foreign things are taking us far, far away from our *svarupa*, that noble self of a servant in the highest plane of the whole organism. The beautiful is playing and dancing in His own Sweetness and Affection. We can reach Him there, but we have to follow this course of ‘do or die’ at every moment. Through self-giving, we can acquire our fortune and not by sitting in one place and collecting information of different locales. What utility we can get, what benefit we can derive from collecting such information? As a master, I am sitting in my room, in my chair,

and I will gather different facts to be utilized for my self-interest. This kind of mentality is not acceptable.

The process of self-giving is given by Srila Rupa Goswami:

adau sraddha tatah, sadhu-sanga 'tha bhajana-kriya

tato 'nārtha-nivṛtīḥ syāt tato nistha ruciḥ tatah

athasaktis tato bhavas tatah pramābhyudānca

sādhakanam āyam premnāḥ pradurbhava, bhavet kramāḥ

Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu 4.15.16

Adau sraddha means to go forth with this faith at every point in your life. I don't mean to say 'Do or die' in the physical sense. Of course, what I am referring to is in the internal sense (the ego).

Bhajana kriya is self-giving with the spirit of 'do or die' – self-giving, inner self-giving, ego-giving. If you can adopt this process, then the undesirable things within you will disappear very easily and quickly. Then, *nistha*, you will find a continuous connection with this sort of principle in your life. This principle will always act continuously in you, and the other fleeting mean desires will not be able to approach you or touch you. Then, you will find *ruci*, a taste – a real taste for that most charming substance. Otherwise, before that continuous connection with Him, whatever taste we think we possess, is all treachery. That is not the real taste.

We want twenty-four hours' continuous connection with that charming substance. Real taste will come after that continuous twenty-four hours'

connection in divine thought of Him. We can rely on that taste. The taste we may find in other positions is not reliable. The taste that comes after twenty-four hours' connection, eliminating all other charms of this world, is reliable. That *ruci* – that taste will guide us. Then, *asakti*, then *bhava* – there are so many signs when you get to that *bhava* stage. This *bhava bhakti* expresses itself as a ray of the sun of *prema*. In this way we are to progress through the process of self-giving.

Our Guru Maharaj especially stressed this point and attracted us to this way of progress. No imitation is allowed as it produces no good effect. Imitation will last for some time, then some offences will be created and that will be a disqualification. This will slow down the process of progress in self-giving and may bring it to a complete stop. If we are taken to the examiner, and we get a stamp of disqualification, then that will hamper our future progress. So, *aparadha*, offence – we must be very careful about this. This is recorded as a discredit, a disqualification in that circle. The examiners will give a stamp of disqualification, and that is *aparadha* – a criminal offence. It makes us unfit and will go against us. Therefore, we shall be very cautious, very careful not to commit any offence – not to imitate a higher state of devotion than our actual station. Rather, we shall remain as newcomers, always seeking a new introduction. There is real danger in a criminal record that will go against us. We must always be careful to protect ourselves from committing any offence against the devotees. This will slow down our spiritual progress.

Learning the Gift of Giving Yourself

We must be very, very careful when we follow the highest object of our eternal life. Our Guru Maharaj gave a special warning – “*sevon mukhe*”. We were not allowed to read much – even these ordinary subjects dealing with *sadhana*, devotional practices – what to speak of the higher literatures. But we were encouraged by “*sravanam-kirtanam*,” hearing from the real source and acting accordingly. In this way, by serving, learn to give yourself properly. There are different methods of service: *sravanam*, hearing; *kirtanam*, chanting; *smaranam*, remembering; and *vandanam*, praying, etc. Then, Srila Rupa Goswami has mentioned sixty-four kinds of devotional practices and it is further mentioned a thousand kinds of devotional practices.

But practices are not very important. The very life of the practice is all-important and that is self-dedication, self-giving. So, be very particular to learn dedication and self-giving. This means practically to work under the guidance of a Vaisnava devotee – getting ready to work under a proper agent. This will help you a great deal to learn, to practice what is dedication to that Sweet Lord.

Guidance must come from those above you. It is very rare, but it is most valuable to us. Whatever directions are coming from above, we must selflessly embrace that as all in all. This is the clue; this is the key to the Hidden Treasures in your heart. I will not work with my whims or serve men on my level. But we

shall very eagerly obey what directions will come from the above plane. This is service proper and it will be a real help for progressing on the path of dedication and self-giving.

One day, in the last days of our Guru Maharaj, he said to one sannyasi who had led a full twenty years of service in the mission, “You did not see me. You could not see who I am. Like a zamindar you have kept some householder servitors under you and from time to time, you try to give something from them to me.

You have become a broker. You are keeping something under you and now and then, you try to give some contribution from them to me. You are a broker, but you should be wholesale mine – my agent. Whatever service you do in this world, you do on my behalf as you are only my agent. But you are not doing according to this truth. You are dependent on those householders while keeping a connection with me. This is not necessary. You are not a member of this world.

You are mine alone. Whatever I say, you should do that and do not sell yourself to any proposal of this world. You are wholesale my servant.”

What is necessary for our progress is very rarely to be found. It comes from a higher plane and we must surrender ourselves to substantiate that reality within us.

viracaya mayi dandam dinabandho dayam va

gatir iha na bhavattah kacid anya mamasti

nipatatu sata-kotir nirbharam va navambhas

tad api kila payodah stuyate catakena

“The Cataka bird is a kind of bird that drinks only rain water from above. This class of bird is always looking high in the sky for rain drops to fall. There may be much water available here on the ground, but this bird will not take a drop.

They are waiting for that rain water which comes from above. Sufficient rain water may come, or thunder may come, but still they will not take a single drop from the earth.”

Our attitude should be like this. Whatever directions will come from above for us to do, we shall take that on our heads as our life and soul. But we shall never take any plan from this mundane world. The Director, the Master, the Lord is there and I am connected with Him. This sort of practice is helpful. We may take the Holy Name, or hear the devotional musical chants, but the very life will be that it is coming from the above place; and I am carrying out that order. In this way, I may be taken above to the higher planes. I shall be directed to the higher layers and I may go there eternally. I am preparing myself only to carry out this spotless, uncoloured order and surrender without any questioning. If we are sure it is coming from the higher layer, then we shall live selflessly at His disposal.

We want selfless service to the higher and not to any mundane source. This is what is necessary for real progress in the line of self-dedication and self-giving.

This is service. Many signs and symptoms are there to indicate the higher directions descending from *Gurudeva*. We shall whole-heartedly embrace the directions given by *Gurudeva*.

Truth cannot come within our jurisdiction

The sum and substance is that by obeying the directions from the Higher, we can make progress towards the higher planes. By serving the Higher, we can hope to be selected by the Higher. We may then be taken up into that higher layer if we are considered qualified through our dedication. If we want to go towards that high, high super-conscious region, then this is the process of self-giving that will be the main tenure of our lives.

Revealed truth is necessary. No intelligence or reason can be applied here. If we apply any reason, then we will be nowhere. A man who is expert in argument will defeat another man not so qualified in argument, but the truth remains regardless. Intellect and reason have no position there because truth, super-consciousness and dedication do not come within the jurisdiction of intellect, logic and reason.

We can invite that High Guest only by serving, by honouring, by self-giving, by heart-giving and never otherwise.

It is not possible to enforce, to capture or to encase Him by any intrigue or by any conspiracy. This will have the opposite effect. This is considered as Satan in another colour. God realization means *saranagati*, self-surrender unto Him.

We can approach Him not only through self-abnegation, but with deep self-surrender. This self-surrender, *saranagati*, will take us in connection with the higher, nobler substance. This self-surrender, self-giving is to be cultivated at all cost. Service is to God, and not to *maya*, misconception. We must be very careful that we are not serving *maya* in a charming form. In the form of god - in a godly form – some *maya* is coming to take us away from our service. So, in our present position, we must very carefully consider the propriety of our service – that to whom we are giving that service are not themselves, serving *maha-maya*.

Try to connect where you are never the master

So, *jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva*, “To hatefully give up all proposals that the intellect will offer to you. To hatefully throw out what your intellect will come to propose to you. What the intellect will be able to judge and accept or not accept, that must be of a lower type. So, summarily you are to reject that and understand you must bow down your head, *namanta eva*. We are to approach the higher substance in this way.”

The beginning of your real self-interest is to bow down your head, capturing your heart automatically. Try to connect with that section where you will always be with folded palms as a servant and never as a master. Such abnegation, such courage of self-giving is necessary if you want to live in the higher plane.

Otherwise, you will become a master and reign in hell. In Satan’s words, “It is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.” But, in wholesale self-giving, just the opposite is necessary.

Even tears and cries will have no value if the inner tendency of self-giving is not awakened there. “*Seva – service, is self-giving*” – this is the main principle of life in the devotee. *This self-giving is really meant towards the higher planes and not here and there around us in this mortal world*. Otherwise, in another way, this self-giving tendency may be captured by the hateful things of this perishable world. *Jnana*, knowledge, is supposed to be very, very pure and free from doubt. In the majority of persons, knowledge is considered very innocent as it does not mix with these gross material things. The higher personalities consider knowledge to be very pure, very innocent and spotless. But, if this knowledge is not connected with Krsna, then it must be hatefully rejected.

In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* it is written:

naiskarmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjitam

na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam

Srimad Bhagavatam 1.5.12

“Knowledge is widely considered as pure, innocent and spotless. But if it is not connected with the Positive Absolute Good, then it is your enemy and it will devour you.”

You are to consider like that, then you will become a qualified candidate. This is *jnana-sunya-bhakti*, self-surrender (*saranagati*), is so pure that even connection with knowledge that is considered to be very innocent and spotless is also hatefully rejected. Such a degree of self-surrender is necessary for the higher association of devotion proper . *Jnana-karmady-anavrtam*, the charm of material acquisition and the charm of mastery, of knowing everything are both rejected.

We do not know anything in the Infinite, even in magnitude or quality. We cannot know anything in the infinite. It is a flow of autocracy. What can we know?

Knowledge means not to store so many false incidents and sell them to the world for some name and fame. No! That is to be hatefully rejected – given up.

But, service – unconditional self-giving – is noble and will take you to the higher, super-conscious region. *Jnana* and *karma* are both discouraged. We are discouraged from handling matter and knowledge. Knowledge will not apply in that plane of dedication. That is the plane of Absolute Will, the flow of Absolute Autocracy and no rule or regulation can work there. So, false gathering, false storing has got no value there – no market value. Indeed, no market is there!

Therefore, only by self-surrender, self-giving will you have such high quality of devotion. So, a serving, a self-giving attitude is our friend. We are a unit of serving attitude and service means to surrender to the Higher. The Higher means, ‘uncontaminated with material and intellectual acquisition.’ This sort of higher devotion swiftly carries us to His Divine Abode where love, beauty and charm

reign supreme.

March towards universal good wherever and whoever you are. Turn your face towards Him and march remembering that Sweet Absolute Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter 7 The Family of God

Whenever difficulties come in one's devotional life, he must search for the remedy. If there is any realization, he will try his best to have favourable association. Suppose by accident, one has lost his senses on the street. Whenever his consciousness returns, he will ask his approaching friends, "Take me to my home where they will take care of me." Whatever little consciousness comes in a person who is incapacitated by an accident, he will say, "Take me to my home.

My home is there." And there again, he may lose external consciousness.

Similarly, whenever this consciousness of laziness creeps within us, we must try to seek out higher associates – devotees that know the value of our tender devotion. They will take care of us like a guardian.

In this line, the devotees are guardians, as they know the value of devotion.

Therefore, when I am going to lose devotion, when a little sense comes to me, then I shall try to extricate myself, and progress towards the devotee camp. They know the value of my little spark of devotion and they will take care of me.

Only association can help us. When we become helpless, association will help us. We shall try our best to go to that association who knows the value of the devotion we hanker for. How faith comes? That is from *sukṛti*, *jñatva sukṛti*, *ajñatva sukṛti*. "Wandering in this world, my energy is consciously and unconsciously utilized by the devotees, the agents of God for His service."

Reality is for Himself and we think we are for ourselves. When an agent transfers our self-tendency into "Reality for Himself", that produces some *sukṛti* in us. This tendency, when accumulated, produces faith, and faith can develop mainly through *sadhu-sanga* – the association of the devotees and also, the scriptures to some extent.

First, when the child is born, he may not cooperate with the mother, but depends on her. Then when the child develops a little, he comes to cooperate more and more. He cries when hungry. When more grown, then he demands, “I want milk, I want this and that.” Practical cooperation for health will come according to growth, and when under-grown (when our growth is stunted), then of course, he has to depend on the agents of the Lord that are moving here and there. That is automatic.

Jnana-sunya-bhakti

Jnana-sunya-bhakti is like a department of the government where the pension is being given to those who have got no service and no livelihood, etc. In this way, the agents of the Lord are moving, creating and utilizing the energy of those needy persons unconsciously by putting it in the “For Itself and By Itself” direction. They get something in remuneration and unconsciously that is being developed into *sukrti* in them. Then, gradually, this comes to faith, service towards the Infinite, the Unknowable – Adhoksaja, which is beyond the jurisdiction of our experience. This is substance existing beyond the jurisdiction of our experience.

Knowledge and consciousness descend from above. But all the knowledge of our experience in this world cannot reach or attract that unknown and unknowable region. Unknown and unknowable to us, but many things can exist there which are beyond our reach. So, finite and infinite live in such a relationship that mainly, everything is dependent on the infinite. Generally, we find that there is very little chance in life for this finite to take the mercy of the infinite. So Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura prays:

vicarite aobi, guna nahi paobi krpa kara chodata vicara

Saranagati

“Oh Lord! If you deal with me according to justice, then I have no hope. For a long time, I have committed innumerable offences at Your feet. To clear out my past misdeeds, I have come to Your “Window of Mercy” to pray – without consideration of my past or future – that you may please extend Your Causeless Grace upon this fallen soul. In this life, I have got no hope. Prabhu! I surrender to You. Whatever You like You may do with me. I have no hope if you give admission to the “Window of Justice”: I am lost for there is no possibility of my

admission.”

This is the way to attain our highest prospect. This has been advised from the school of devotion. To approach that department, you have to surrender completely and you will have a bright prospect. The devotees, the agents of that department, have come to preach to us – to canvass, “Approach that department of mercy and do not go for justice – otherwise, you will be the loser. Surrender completely and when His causeless benediction will come down to you, you will be amply rewarded. Direct yourself to that which has no bounds, no limits – approach that department.” This is *suddha-bhakti*.

While falling flat at His Holy Feet, we are to surrender. If not, then I am continuing the war against the Absolute. This world of experience I am living in – it means, “I am at war with the Absolute vibration by creating different types of vibrations against the universal vibration.” These vibrations are coming in contact with one another and are being crushed and evaporated into nowhere – they cannot stand. When coming to clash with the absolute vibration, then everything – anything – is reduced to ashes. That has got no beginning; it has got no ending.

That fundamental vibration of love, sympathy, beauty and charm may be like motherly affection to a child. Even more than that, it may be the love of consorhood in its highest perfection – a twenty-four hour engagement in the “Family of God”.

Chapter 8 The Extra-Ordinary Plane of Experience

When performing *bhajana* and *kirtana*, what should be the colour of our attitude? Meditation of a formal nature does not have much affect here. We shall try *saranagati* –surrender. Our whole attention should be concentrated on surrender.

Once, a gentleman, a zamindar, took *Harinama* initiation from our Guru Maharaja and asked, “While I count on the beads, what should I think of in my mind? Is there any portrait of Krsna or *Sri Murti*? How can I engage and utilize my mind at that time while counting the beads?”

Our Guru Maharaj answered, “The mind has nothing to do in the supra-mental area. The mind is like a vulture. As a vulture goes to the cremation ground, so mind and other senses will try to fall there and make it mundane – a cremation ground. This is all mortal. They have got all mortal experience. The mind, the eye, the ear, etc. – everything has got mortal experience.” So, whenever you take the Holy Name, the other senses, including the mind, will try to make it a mortal field with their prejudices and experiences of this mortal world. They fall on it and make it a cremation ground. Do not allow it. Instead, we must try to understand, “I have got some spiritual sound which is completely different from this mortal world, and that sound will gradually evolve a spiritual figure or colour.”

The Stage of Transcendental Waiting

Srila Jiva Goswami says, after receiving the spiritual sound from *Gurudeva*, and concentrating on the Holy Name, then, there is a stage of transcendental waiting.

How the effects of the spiritual sound will come down to us? We shall go on counting the beads with such expectant attitude. We shall never feel ourselves down in this mundane world, but rather expecting some new transcendental experience at every moment. Then the colour will completely come, the *rupa*, the form will come; from *rupa* will come *guna*, the quality. These will come down from above, from the plane of *Paramatma*. The ordinary plane of experience, the mental plane, the plane of reason, the plane of soul, the plane of Super-soul (*paramatma*) – in this way the planes from gross to subtle are there.

So, it will come down: it will have to come with my expectant attention.

For example, a particular kind of bird always expects rain – the Cataka. They do not take any water from the ground – neither river nor lake – nothing of the kind. Only rainwater will they take. Similarly, our attitude should be like that.

Always in expectation for some transcendental experience, we shall go on searching. First, the sound, from the sound comes form, from the form comes quality; from that relativity, the paraphernalia will come. Then the pastimes will come and we shall find ourselves as a unit in that plane. It is not this mundane self, but my soul has got a serving position in there – in that plane. In this way, we are to be reinstated in our original spiritual position. So, the mind cannot be allowed to engage in its own speculative line in this case.

The line of service is always given in this way: do your service under a bona fide devotee (*guru*). Whatever you do, get your direction from the higher agents and you will be benefited. It is said that raw materials in the hand of an expert can produce miracles. Otherwise, raw materials are useless. So, you have got raw materials – spiritually unrefined – and you want spiritual growth. The higher and proper utilization of those assets is necessary and that guidance can come from the transcendental arena. As much as higher direction will come, we shall be prepared to surrender at their disposal. We shall be more benefited in this super-scientific line. Whatever is done under the direction of the devotees that has got transcendental value – that will be progressive within me. I am leading myself by following the order of a Vaisnava.

Centralization is necessary – we must be Krsna centralized. At present we are already different, partially centralized; but all must be for the Centre. One conclusion – all is ending in Krsna. All is moving towards Krsna's satisfaction.

So, this ego must be dissolved and we shall try that within the Krsna Centre. The example is there. This is the positive side. We are to find out within us. So, take the Holy Name and hear *Srimad Bhagavatam*. There may be *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksa* according to its purpose. But when they are performed only for the interest of Krsna, then it becomes *bhakti*, devotion.

I am not reading this book to attain fame by delivering lectures to the public. In such a case, it will not be devotion to read the book. I am reading the book because my higher master wants me to do this. This line should be found and should be followed. Whatever I am doing is not for my interest but for the interest of my master. Whatever I do, that will have spiritual guidance which will make it progress towards Krsna, towards the Centre and the Central interest.

We shall try to do everything in this way. Otherwise, taking the name and studying the scriptures may also be false – if it is not for the Central interest.

Selfish interest may also use all those devotional forms.

Some will be *sahajiyas*, imitationists, some will be traders and they will each have a reaction. For the interest of the Krsna conception, the imperative necessity – the exclusive necessity – is that we should come in contact with a real Vaisnava who has got Krsna's interest at heart. Wholesale converted to Krsna Consciousness – Krsna Consciousness means Krsna centered – for the

satisfaction of Krsna. Everyone is searching after some separate satisfaction and running after that in different shades of life. We are to eliminate that and accept this – wholesale conversion towards only satisfying Him.

And who is He? He is *svarat*, the Autocrat, the despot. The highest conception of the Truth is Absolute good. No consideration of this world can come to that standard. Absolute good is such. Autocracy must be with the Absolute good the Holiest conception imaginable. Absolute good has full power there. No law can bind Him, that would be suicidal. *Svarat* means Autocrat. He Himself is Emperor without apparently allowing consideration for another.

Chapter 9 The Principle Guide In Service

tvam gopika vrsaraves tanayantike 'si

sevadhikarini guro nija-pada padme

dasyam pradaya kuru mam vraja-kanane sri-

radhangri-sevana-rase sukhinim sukhabdhe

The word *Gopi* refers to Radharani or may also refer to Sri Rupa Manjari Gopi or Sri Lalita Gopi. All of them are trouped as *Gopis*. The disciple will be grouped into a particular camp of service according to his inner tendency. When the highest position is attained, *guru* is meant there as the principal guide in service.

We shall be in *madhurya-rasa*, and they are all helping in the service of Srimati Radharani. They are all leaders. There are also different departments, where we are posted, and the head of that department is our *Guru*.

So the prayer to *Sri Guru* should be: “Oh my *Guru*, you are a *Gopi*. You are Srimati Radharani’s intimate servitor. You make me happy by giving facility for my service towards Her. You are always under Srimati Radharani’s direction.

You please give me the facility that I can render service acceptable by Srimati Radharani.

You are always adjacent to Vrsabhanu's daughter, Srimati Radharani. You are entrusted with responsible service for Srimati Radharani. You are allowed to partake there in Her service. You please engage me also in that service. You are continuously giving supply to the service of Srimati Radharani. Kindly engage me there!

You are always nearby our great Srimati Radharani. You always have engagement in Her service. Please allow me to partake in that service to the very beautiful, ecstatic, sweet lotus-like Divine Feet of Srimati Radharani. Give me a chance to be accepted there in Her service."

The difficulty is that the position of *guru* varies. According to one's inner innate nature of service, the immediate leader is *guru*. So, *guru* is generally *rupanuga*.

We must serve under the direction of Sri Rupa Manjari. Sri Rupa Manjari is the leader of the junior school of *Gopis*.

The senior section sometimes cannot enter when Radha and Krsna are alone.

They keep aloof at that time of intimacy. But, the junior section can enter there at that time to render some confidential service. The junior section in one way, receives the highest benefit. So, this is the *rupanuga sampradaya*, the spiritual succession of Sri Rupa. Sri Rupa is under Sri Lalita who is a senior *Gopi* exclusively devoted to Srimati Radharani. Sometimes the senior friends cannot go to the camp when Radha and Krsna are alone.

The junior section can approach at that time and render confidential service. The leader of the most confidential circle is Sri Rupa Manjari. Sri Rupa, our *Gurudeva*, is one and the same with Sri Rupa Manjari in *madhurya-rasa*.

Similarly, in *sakhya-rasa*, Sudama and Subala are in the middle as a group. The *Guru* conception will vanish there in Subal or Baladeva in *sakhya-rasa*. Also, the same principle applies in *dasya-rasa* and *vatsalya-rasa*. In this way, the leaders are with particular positions and according to our inner capacity, we shall be fixed there in loving service. We shall do our service under their direction.

This is the principle of *Guru* there.

Who is *Guru*?

On all sides there are *Gurus* who are helping us towards the Krsna conception.

Who is *Guru*? *Guru*'s function is to help us towards Krsna consciousness, Krsna's service.

Everything is *Guru*, even the trees and the sand, the dust of that holy land. They are all reminding, helping us, in our service. But, the main *guru* will be that special leading officer just over me where I am posted, that permanent guiding officer, there stands the position of my *guru*.

Our Guru Maharaj used to say, "If we can cast a deeper glance into the higher, then we can see that *guru* means Srimati Radharani. *Guru* is one and the same with Srimati Radharani.

ektu ucchu hoye dekhe – radharani purna asta nayaka

bhave seva karen, anyanya sakhigani

Our Guru Maharaj, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad confided in us,

“My *Guru* is Sri Guna Manjari. I know if I can have a deeper vision of my *Gurudeva*. I can see her fully identified with Srimati Radharani. What else is there? No space between – rather, Srimati Radharani in Her fullest mood is perfectly focused in the heart of my *Gurudeva*. Clearly I can see that. I don’t know any other.”

Chapter 10 The *Brahma Gayatri*

Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj got his sacred thread in the family tradition when he was fourteen years of age. He received one book where it was mentioned that if one can chant the Gayatri mantra 432 times daily, he can achieve many spiritual benefits. Srila Guru Maharaj embraced that suggestion wholeheartedly with the culminated understanding that Sri Gayatri Herself is conscious spirit and not mere words and oral vibrations. He tried his best to understand the revealed truth – without consulting dictionaries or books on grammar – and he would feel some prakasa, some light of truth, coming from the divine incantation of Sri Gayatri Mantra. With that inspiration, he penned an expansive glorification of Sri Gayatri Devi that is herein presented in the following Sanskrit verse:

Sri Gayatri-nirglithartham

*bhvades tat savitur varenya-vihitam ksetra-jna sevyarthakam bhargo vai
vrsabhanu-jatma-vibhavaikaradhana sri-puram*

bhargo jyotir achintya lilana-sudhaikaradhana sri-puram

bhargo dhama-taranga-khelana-sudhaikaradhana sri-puram

bhargo dhama sada-nirasta-kuhakam prajna-lila-puram

devasyamrta-rupa-lila-rasadheraradha-dhih prerinah

devasyamrta-rupa-lila-purusasyaradha-dhih presinah

devasya dhuti-sundaraika-purusasyaradhya-dhih presinah

gayatri-muralista-kirtana-dhanam radha-padam dhimahi

gayatri-gaditam mahaprabhu-matam radha-padam dhimahi

dhir aradhanam eva nanyad iti tad radha-padam dhimahi

The Elaborate Commentary of *Gayatri Mantra*

The meaning of the *Brahma Gayatri* must come in the same line as the full-fledged conception of *Srimad Bhagavatam* or equivalent. The *Gayatri Mantra* and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* are one and the same. *Srimad Bhagavatam* is the elaborate commentary of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The meaning of the *Gayatri* must therefore come in line with *Srimad Bhagavatam*. How is this possible? The intermediate steps are supplied in supportive *sastra* revealing that the meaning of *Gayatri* is non-different from *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

artho 'yam brahma-sutranam, bharatartha-vinirnayah gayatri-bhasya-rupo 'sau, vedartha-paribrmhitah

Garuda Purana & Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa 10.39

What is the meaning of *Gayatri*? It means in Sanskrit, *ganat trayate*, “A particular kind of song which gives us salvation, relief and emancipation.”

Gayatri is called “*Veda-Mata*” – the Mother of the *Vedas* – as *Gayatri* has produced the entire *Veda*. The first emanation is the transcendental syllable *Om* (*omkara pranava*) then comes the *Gayatri*, the *Vedas*, the *Vedanta-Sutras* and then finally, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* – the mature fruit of all *Vedic* conclusions.

The meaning, the purport of the *Gayatri Mantra* is found in the full-fledged conception of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. This Krsna conception of Godhead is the highest. *Gayatri* must give us this meaning. How to extract the Krsna conception from *Gayatri*? This is the present objective placed before us. How to extract *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the Krsna conception, from within the womb of *Gayatri*?

The *Gayatri Mantra* must say that there is Krsna consciousness within her womb and that should be drawn out.

I heard that Srila Jiva Goswami had given such a meaning but I could not find it.

I heard that he had extended the meaning of *Gayatri* leading to Krsna consciousness but I could not discover that anywhere. However, the search itself prompted me to draw the meaning of the *Gayatri Mantra* towards Krsna consciousness and so, I did it in that way.

The Objective of Life: Self-Determination

The general meaning of *Gayatri* is, “That song which grants us emancipation – liberation. Liberation must have meaning in the positive line. Liberation does not only mean, “to be free from the negative side,” but continued positive attainment. The definition of true emancipation in *Srimad Bhagavatam* is positive attainment.

muktir hitvanyatha rupam svarupena vyavasthitih

“It is not only to attain freedom from the negative side, but *Srimad Bhagavatam* gives the positive attainment.” Until and unless we attain “our” positive position (the highest possible), true liberation is not effected. A mere withdrawal from the negative side cannot be said to be liberation proper. Hegel said, “The object of our life is self-determination.” We must determine our normal function in the organic whole. Not mere emancipation from the negative side, but our participation in the positive function which is considered to be the highest attainment for us. This is only possible through service in the land of dedication.

This is the true meaning of the *Gayatri Mantra*.

The word, “*Gayatri*” comes from two Sanskrit words – *ganat* and *trayate*.

Trayate means “Positive attainment to the final stage (*svarupena vyavasthitih*)”.

We are to take this meaning. *Ganat* means, “Not mere sound, but musical sound.” This musical sound draws us to Mahaprabhu’s *sankirtana* that carries the touch of the flute of Krsna. We find divine sound and music there. Now we shall analyze what is the *Brahma Gayatri Mantra*.

om bhur bhuvah svah, tat savitur varenyam

bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo nah pracodayat

Om is the seed *mantra* which contains everything within it. *Bhur* is where we are – the world of our experience, the world of our sense perception. *Bhuvah* is at the back of that – our mental acquisition. The effect of our mental acquisition takes us to our present position of experience. It is not by accidental existence that we are here in this world of our experience. We have acquired such a position by our previous *karma*. And the area of our previous *karma* is called *bhuvah-loka*. *Bhuvah-loka* is the mental sphere. This physical sphere is only an outcome of that mental sphere. The present world of experience is the product of our previous mental impulses.

Svar means *Bhuddhi-loka*, the plane of decision-making. What to do? What not to do? What I like; what I dislike. This is called *sankalpah/vikalpah*. I like this; I don't like that – this is the soil of the mental world of acceptance and rejection.

You may like to do something, but you may not do that – otherwise you will be a loser. This faculty of reason is *svar-loka*. In this way, in this mundane world, there are different planes of existence – *Bhur-*, *Bhuvah-*, *Svah-*, *Mahar-*, *Jana-*, *Tapah-* and *Satya-loka*. The negative side has got these seven planes of life from *Bhur-loka* up to *Satya-loka* where the creator, Lord Brahma lives. The master of the whole world of experience of the negative side lives in *Satya-loka*. The four Kumaras – devotees who hold high positions as saints – also reside in *Satyalo*.

These seven layers of the material world, from the gross to the subtle, are dealt with in detail in Srila Sanatana Goswami's *Brhat Bhagavatamrtam*. The negative side, consisting of the combination of the three modes of material nature that produces this world, finishes in *Satya-loka*. Then begins *Viraja*, the verge of the equilibrium of the negative side – the last limit of material consciousness. And the verge of equilibrium of the positive side is *Brahmaloka*, the beginning of the "Land of Service" – the equipoised verge of the positive world. Then, the world of reality, the world of dedication and service, the soul's world proper, begins there in *Siva-loka* and continues further in the plane of Vaikuntha. The devotee, Siva, then Sri Narayana in the Vaikunthas. In this way, they develop into *Krsna-loka*, Vrndavan. The seven planes that are represented in the *Gayatri Mantra* by *Bhur*, *Bhuvah* and *Svah*, are summarized in one word – *tat*.

Savitur means Surya, the sun. Sun means figuratively, 'that which illuminates all objects.' This – the three gross and subtle strata of the world – is shown to us by a particular light. What is that? That is *jivatma* – the soul. The sun does not show us the world, but the soul's influence does. It is not the sun, but it is really the

soul that shows us this world. In *Bhagavad-gita* we find, *ekah krtsnam lokam imam ravih*: “This world is really being expressed to us by the *atma*, the soul which is just like the sun. The sun can show us the colour-world, the ear can reveal the sound-world, the sense of touch can reveal the touch-world, etc.

However, in the centre is the soul who gives us an understanding of the environment, the world of perception. This perception is possible only because of the soul. The soul is like the sun as it is showing everything – *tat savitur*.

To summarize, all these seven strata of our experience are reduced to one word, *tat* – that. Who is showing us “that”? The illuminator – the sun is showing us.

“Sun” here means soul. The soul means not the “universal soul”, but the “individual soul”. The individual soul is the cause of the world. “It is not that the mind is in the world, but that the world is in the mind,” said Berkeley. The world is in the mind. Everything is also in the sun. Whatever we see – that is in the sun. The sun can show us everything. If there is no sun, then everything is dark and we cannot see anything. The soul is light, the subject, and the objects are these seven planes of experience. If the *atma* – the soul – withdraws, then everything is gone. This kind of consciousness gives birth to the path leading to Goloka.

Varenyam means *puja*, worshipable, venerable and reverential. Our soul is venerable. The soul is the subject and this world is its object. However, there is another domain that is venerated and worshiped by the soul. This is the Supersoul, *Paramatma* area. “*Bhargo*”.

Bhargo means the Super-subjective area where the Supersoul, the Super-subject resides. *Bhargo* means:

dhamna svena sada nirasta-kuhakam satyam param dhimahi

In the first verse of *Srimad Bhagavatam* it is mentioned that here we are going to deal with another world, by whose rays all misconceptions are brushed aside.

In its own pristine glory, it shows the very abode of the Lord. I am talking about that world. So, the subject is the soul, and the object is the world of mundane experience. And the subject’s venerable area that is superior to the subject – the soul – is that Super-subjective area.

Bhargo means, “More subtle than the soul, and holding more important position than the *jiva*-soul.” That is the Supersoul area. *Bhargo* means in general, ordinary light. But, really it is the Supersoul Who can see and can show everything in more detail. Just as an X-ray can show us what the ordinary eye cannot see, so *bhargo*, the *svarupa-sakti*, the higher more powerful light, can also reveal the soul. Then *bhargo* belongs to whom? It belongs to *Deva*, pertaining to *Deva*.

Devasya means belonging to *Deva*. What is the meaning of *Deva*? *Deva* means, “Who is very beautiful and playful.” That is Sri Krsna – Reality the Beautiful.

He is non-differentiated substance, but is full of *lila* – Divine Pastimes. *Deva* means beauty and pastimes combined. His domain is *bhargo* which is venerated by the *jiva*-soul. What is that? It is the *svarupa-sakti* – the *vaibhava*, the extension of Srimati Radharani. She holds the full service responsibility and energy to serve Sri Krsna. So *bhargo* is no less than the *vaibhava*, the extended body of Srimati Radharani containing everything for the service of Sri Krsna.

This is the *Rasaraja-mahabhava* conception. *Bhargo* represents *Mahabhava*, the Predominated Moiety, and *Deva* - Krsna – represents *Rasaraja*, the Predominating Moiety.

Dhimahi in the *Gayatri Mantram* means, “*Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi*”. We are invited, “You come and meditate.” What sort of meditation is possible there in that Super-subjective area? That meditation is in the sense of culture – cultivation of service to the Higher by the practice of veneration and worship.

This sort of experience is possible there. *Dhimahi* is not abstract meditation but means *Krsnanusilanam* – to participate in the spontaneous flow of the current of devotion in that Super-subjective area, Vrndavan.

Dhiyo yo’ nah pracodayat – And what will be the result? The capacity of your cultivation will be increased.

dasa kare vetan, more deha prema-dhana

We serve and what remuneration will we get? We will receive a greater capacity with more willingness to serve. What is the remuneration of service? The serving principle, the serving spirit is increased and enhanced – just as interest is added to capital in the bank. I am getting the interest; I do not draw the money

but the interest comes and is added to the capital – in this way.

dasa kare vetan, more deha prem-dhana

We shall try to cultivate with all our attention towards that plane. We shall try to serve, to dedicate ourselves, and the dedicating principle will be increased again and again. He will give us *prema* as remuneration. *Prema* means the special capacity to render loving service. This is the inner meaning of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The *Gayatri Mantra* is the song of salvation. This song that begins from Goloka descends as *sankirtana* in the middle stages to improve our service towards the highest goal. *Kirtana* means that which is sun. So, *sankirtan* begins with the *Brahma Gayatri* and then comes to the Gauranga stage. It began in *Krsna-kirtan*, touching this plane and then again, it reaches Vrndavan as the flute-song – *kirtana*, “The sweet sound of the flute of Krsna”. The *sankirtana* of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu reinstates us very quickly in our highest serving position as all are interconnected.

When we enter the area of Vrndavan, there – the sound of the *vamsi*, the flute, helps to excite and engage the servants in their own respective duties. When the flute is sounded, then the *Gopis* and other devotees become well adjusted in their respective duties. At night, hearing the sound of the flute of Krsna, the *Gopis* will run to the Yamuna thinking, “Oh, is He coming or is He going?”

When mother Yasoda also hears the flute, she thinks: “My son is nearby and He is coming home very soon.” In this way, the sound of the flute is engaging the different servants of respective positions to be mindful of their own duties, their service.

krsna kirtan gayatrir-radha padam dhimahi

Radha padam dhimahi: all these services are represented fully in Sri Radhika; and all others like branches are parts of Her. *Madhurya-rasa* is the *mukhya-rasa*, the chief *rasa*, the culmination of all *rasas*. In the conception of *Rasaraj-Mahabhava*, Srimati Radharani is *Mahabhava* who represents the whole serving attitude of Goloka, the abode of Sri Krsna.

The flute-song of Sri Krsna is reminding us and engaging us in our service. And what is that service? That service is to surrender ourselves to Srimati Radharani and to accept Her suggestions. The *Brahma Gayatri Mantra* will excite and entice us to be mindful about Srimati Radharani’s sweet lotus feet – to obey Her

orders. She represents the whole Super-subjective serving area. So, to try to engage in Her service, under Her order, to accept Her direction and to obey Her – that is service to Srimati Radharani. In this way, the meaning of the *Brahma Gayatri* has been drawn to *Radha-dasyam*, self-determination – *svarupena vyavasthitih*.

The Ultimate End of our Life

The partial representation in *vatsalya-rasa* and *sakhya-rasa* are also present there in some other way. They are part and parcel of the *mukhya-rasa*, the chief *rasa* and they all support this main *rasa*. In *vatsalya-rasa*, the devotees will serve Nanda-Yaosda. In *sakhya-rasa*, they will serve Sridam-Sudama, but ultimately the whole substance in one conception is included in Srimati Radharani. So, *Radha-dasyam* – service to Srimati Radharani has been drawn out from the *Brahma Gayatri Mantra*. This is the ultimate end of our life. It cannot but be upward and progressive.

And She in Her fullest mercy advents with Krsna – a combined sum as the Golden Lord, Mahaprabhu illuminating *Gayatri* as *Radha-dasyam*. The *Vedas* and *Upanisads* reach their fullest theistic conclusions in the acme of all faith, by name, the *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

bhargo vai vrsabhanuja-atma-vibhavaikaradhana sri-puram

Bhanu means the sun, or who illuminates by light. Srimati Radharani is the daughter of King Vrsabhanu so the word *bhanu* has been selected. This represents Her personal extended self. *Vaibhava* means that which comes out as extended self. *Prabhava* is the central representation and *vaibhava* is the outer extension. The very gist of the *svarupa-sakti* is Srimati Radharani and the whole *svarupa-sakti*, the internal potency, is Her extended self.

What is Her characteristic? She is *aradhana* – who worships Herself. She is Sri, Laksmi, the gist of Beauty, the beauty and sweetness of service to Sri Krsna. The town, the abode of Her beautiful service is the whole *svarupa-sakti*. Just as rays of light extend from the sun, so the whole *svarupa-sakti* is an extension of the person *Mahabhava*, Sri Radhika. *Rasaraja* and *Mahabhava* – this *svarupa-sakti* is the extension of *Mahabhava*. *Bhargo* means the extended self of *Mahabhava*.

Mahabhava means *aradhana* (a particular mood of worship that satisfies Sri Krsna), Sri, and Laksmi.

Radharani is also called Sri. Her *sobha* (Sri means *sobha*, beauty) is Her extension. Her beautifully extended self and that is the whole *bhargo*, the whole area. She is the gist, the essence, and this is the extended self. And what is Her nature? That is All-Serving. She has developed this whole area of “*bhargo*”. She has developed Herself into such a beautiful area of Her *svarupa-sakti*, and thereby She serves Her Lord, Sri Krsna. They all come out from Her Beautiful, effulgent Self. The very gist, the very sweetness is She, Sri Radha in the *Rasaraj-Mahabhava* conception. This is the inner meaning of the *Brahma Gayatri Mantra*.

anyabhilasita sunyam, jnana-karmady-ananvrtam

(Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.1.11)

“The fleeting desires and the permanent, elevating nature of those who want to become ‘knowers’ and ‘masters’ of everything, is suicidal. To make progress on our knowing and understanding capacity is a waste of energy. So, try to drive out the ghost – the ego – in different forms as *karma*, *jnana* and *yoga*, etc.” In other words, the lording-it-over tendency must be vanquished.

Chapter 11 That Wonderful Stride

In his *Krsna-karnamrta*, Bilvamangal Thakur states, “*bhaktis tvayi sthiratara bhagavan yadi syad*” – My Lord, if my dedication, my veneration to You is permanent – it is in a settled stage; *daivena nah phalati divya-kisora-murtih* – and if it reaches to such a height that we can find *divya-kisora-murtih* – if we can reach so far to find out the eternal pastimes of the Divine Couple; if we can reach to this extent – then we will find *muktih svayam mukulitanjali sevati* ‘*sman*

– Oh, the facility of liberation – emancipation – with folded palms will come to serve us in any way we like.

As well, *dharmartha-kama-gatayah sramaya-pratiksah*; *dharma*, the results of being dutiful – *artha*, the art of money-making – *kama*, the objects of sense perception – they are all ready and waiting outside for whenever a call comes from us to run to our front excitedly, “How can I serve you, my master, my Lord?”

That will be our position. *Dharma, artha, kama* will wait outside and whenever we will call them, they will present themselves, “What do you want me to do?”

And *mukti*, liberation will always be moving around us with folded palms doing service of different types if, in our fortuitous position, we can rise up to such a height as to find that Divine Couple engaged in happy pastimes.”

Bilvamangal Thakur showed in his life, a peculiar example. How, from the house of a prostitute, he went straight to Vrndavan and got the grace of the Supreme Entity. How, in his life he was so much engrossed – almost swallowed up wholly – as a sensualist of the lowest type and yet, from that position in a single life, he could raise himself to the highest stage of realization of Reality the Beautiful.

Mahaprabhu took two books from South India; one was *Brahma-Samhita* and the other, *Krsna-karnamrta*. *Krsna-karnamrta* is about the pastimes of Vrndavan and *Sri Brahma-Samhita* shows the ontological basis of the Absolute – how the Lord of Vrndavan is the highest conception of Reality.

Krsna-lila is not a matter of history; in history events occur. They happen once and cannot reoccur at any time. History is a phenomenon in which what went on in the past never comes again. There is an expression that. “History repeats itself,” but that is in the similar nature of the event, not in the actual fact. History repeats its nature but what is gone – is gone. But in *Krsna-lila* in the eternal world, it is not so. It may present the same thing every time – at every second.

So, it is called *nitya-lila*, eternal pastimes – crossing the limitation and jurisdiction of history. In history, what is past is dead. But in the pastimes of the Lord, they are always present, *nitya* – eternal.

He can show Himself in His eternal forms simultaneously. So, in His past, present and future, all events are simultaneously occurring. When He enters the arena of Kamsa, different groups are seeing Him in different ways. What is seen by one section of people is seen in a different way by another section, according to their own nature. Even the blind can see Him if He wills. If He wills to show Himself to anyone – even the blind – they can see Him clearly, because the eyes of flesh are not necessary to see Him. By His willpower alone, He can reveal Himself to any person. That was the case with Dhrtarastra in the *Kuru-sabha*.

Dhrtarastra said, “For the time being, my Lord, restore my eyesight so that I can see Your wonderful form which others are seeing and praising. You can do

anything, so for the time being, remove my blindness.”

“It is not necessary to remove your blindness, Dhrtarastra! I say, ‘You see Me,’ and you will see Me” And by His order Dhrtarastra saw! His order, His wish is everything. His simple will is everything – the cause of all existence. The Kurus wanted to see Draupadi naked, but Draupadi’s appeal reached Him and He sanctioned unlimited cloth – that cloth became infinite – of infinite character. As much clothing as they removed, so much cloth yet remained. It is the will, the *vicara*, which is everything. Such great potency of such high quality is in the Prime Cause. We are accustomed to think, “This is good; this is bad” and “This is possible, this is impossible.” But these rules do not apply in this case – in His case. All of our experience will fail to occupy even a negligible, miniscule part of His Kingdom.

All of His steps are Wonderful

He is wonderful. In the example of Vamanavatar it is told of His “Wonderful Stride” – *adbutkrama*. With one stride, he covered the whole earth and with the next, He captured the whole of heaven. He then needed a place to put His third step, but where? He is *adbutkrama*. He, of wonderful stride – all His steps are wonderful. He is wonder personified – the source of all wonder to our tiny brain.

He is here, He is also everywhere. With His full representation He is everywhere and yet He is nowhere! Everything is in Him and nothing is in Him!

Krsna says to Arjuna, “Try to understand My peculiar position.” He is the mystery of all mysteries. Even our own soul is astonishing to our worldly experience.

*ascharyavat pasyati kascid enam, ascharyavad vadati tathaiva canyah
ascharyavac caiman anyah srnoti, srutvapy enam veda na caiva kascit
Bhagavad-gita 2.29*

“We do not even know the extraordinary nature of our own self. It is of a very high order.” But our attention is focused toward so many mortal things. We have been introduced to, and captured by, the meanest aspects of this world. This is the consequence of the mood of enjoyment.

We want to enjoy, we want to exploit – a good exploiter is a king to us. But exploitation in itself is degrading, very mean and low. It takes us to the lowest

position and makes us victims of a great reaction. Exploitation and enjoyment – we are in the midst of them and we do not know anything, cannot think of anything but enjoyment. We want to understand anything and everything in terms of enjoyment. We are in such a filthy degraded position: only “enjoyment, enjoyment” – that is exploitation. But to exploit is the meanest type of nature. It is hateful and we must get out of the clutches of that ghost of exploitation.

There is another ghost – renunciation, idleness. But the noble thing is dedication – a dedicated life. There are two ghosts – one of renunciation; and the other of exploitation. We have to get out of that nightmare, that mania which is based on our tendency to measure things to be good or bad. In exploitation there is division into regular and irregular, or *dharma* and *adharma*.

And then there is renunciation. So many great stalwarts of that conception recommend a complete cessation of the dynamic life. A dead stop: but that should not be the prospect of any conscious man. A dead stop to life – is that any goal of life for the saner section?

A life of nobility, a life of dedication – not ordinary dedication for the environment, but to the Highest Good, the highest form of life.

In the lower stage dedication is calculated; in the higher stage spontaneous, automatic, dynamically uncalculating instantaneous flow! Real joy is there. Joy resides there in quality and quantity; in every way, real life is there. Life is there and here it is casting the worst shadow, a perverted reflection.

Yet we are told, *uddhared atmanatmanam*, the key is in our own hand. The freedom by which we can associate with anything good or bad and reap the accorded result is in our hand. How is it so? We are parched for freedom and yet the key is in our hand?

Ultimately, we are told that the key is in our own hand. No one else is to be blamed for our present condition. But there is always the possibility of noble help being extended to us, and we must accept that. Our past actions also influence us a great deal – whether they were good, bad or of the eternal aspiration – *sukrti*. But ultimately, the possibility of free action is not taken away from us at any stage – even if we are reduced to the level of taking birth as a tree! There also, the freedom is within. It is hard to think that a tree has got independence – free will – but it is there, in a suppressed state.

Freedom is within us also. We may try as far as possible to understand how it is so. Because our freedom is covered by so many conditions, we may think that we are not free – that we are forced by circumstances – it may seem so. Still, we are free for our selection of any path – good or bad. Our existence is very small and so, our freedom is also small and meagre. But it is there. Though almost negligible, still, it is – it exists.

Chapter 12 Fulfilment Begins in Remembering

Generally, if all our activity is stopped by unfavourable weather, we think, “This is very bad.” We are men of action, men who exploit the environment and nature for gathering some energy. We are always trying to collect some energy for our use. That is our nature. The very nature of those who live in this mortal world is to collect more and more energy and wealth that can be utilized in a time of need. If there is any hindrance to that end, we think it is a very bad circumstance, in opposition to the object of our life. But to remind us about the importance of our inner wealth, we are advised that the outer nature cannot do us so much harm as can our internal nature – that is, our apathy to collect more wealth for the inner existence, the inner self. Be mindful of that.

Losing things of this mortal world is not bad, it is all coming and going. The body itself, the centre of all this activity, will also vanish. Then what is the necessity of collecting so much energy for the bodily connection? So, awaken your consciousness. Find the real person within – the soul. Search him out and try to help him. That is possible only with help from the *sadhu*.

The day in which we do not find any saint or have any discussion about the real purpose of life – the inner life, the inner substance – that day we are the loser.

Be conscious of that. In all respects, in any way possible, mind your own lesson – mind your own interest.

Find your own self-interest. Be unmindful towards the external world and circumstance. Dive deep into reality, the inner world. Find your inner self, the inner world where you really live, where your inner self is living. Try to find your Home, go back to God, back to Home.

Your energy must be utilized for going Home, not for wandering in this land of death. Try to avoid the land of death at any cost. Always try to find the eternal soil, that soil to which you belong. Try to understand what is your home, why it is your home. Home comfort – what does it mean? It means our birthplace, the place where you are born.

In *Srimad Bhagavatam* we find this verse:

satam prasangan mama virya-samvido

bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah

taj-josanad asv apavarga-vartmani

sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramisyati

Srimad Bhagavatam 3.25.25

“In the association of pure devotees, discussions about Me are very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. Such talks, which are full of spiritual potency, are a source of sweetness, and by such cultivation, the path of liberation from worldly life quickly opens. Then gradually one attains firm faith which, in due course, develops into taste and then real love for Me.”

This was spoken by the incarnation of the Lord, Sri Kapiladeva, to His mother, Devahuti, in response to her inquiry as to what is the real goal of life and how to attain it. It came about in this way. Devahuti was married to the sage, Kardama Rsi. After passing some years in the enjoyment of married life, Devahuti conceived a child in her womb from the Rsi. In *Bhagavad-gita* the Lord says: *prajanas casmi kandarpah*, “Of Cupids, I am He who ensure progeny.” And elsewhere, it is said, *prayanaya na rataye*, married life is not meant for enjoyment, but for the purpose of producing good progeny.

When the objective of their marriage was achieved, the Rsi proposed that he retire from married life. He told Devahuti, “You have a child in your womb and it is not an ordinary child – the Lord Himself is coming. So, I am going to live alone for my own higher purpose of life.”

Then, Devahuti said, “I have such a good partner. I am fortunate to have a saint like you as my husband, but I did not take proper advantage of your noble

personality to learn anything about *Brahman*, about the Lord, about my inner life's necessity and its fulfilment. I did not inquire about that. I was only busy to serve you, to satisfy your desires. Though I had such a noble companion, I did not utilize my fortune. Now I pray that you may stay for some time and teach me, help me in spiritual life and then you may go."

Kardama Rsi replied. "You will get help from your son. It is the Lord Himself who is coming – not an ordinary child. Remember this, and in time you will receive that spiritual help from Him. So I won't stay; I shall go now." He departed. Soon, the child appeared and Devahuti raised that child alone. Because of her great motherly affection as her son grew, she gradually forgot what her husband had revealed – that He was not an ordinary child.

In course of time, when the boy had grown and was one day absorbed. Devahuti was reminded, "Oh, the mood of my child does not seem to be ordinary." She could understand that He was engaged in deep thought and considered, "His father foretold that the Lord would appear through me and now I see it is true.

My son's mood does not seem to be worldly but it is from above. His mind is absorbed in transcendental thought."

She then slowly approached Him. "Child, your father told me that You are not an ordinary boy of this world. You are Divine. I wanted some spiritual advice from him but he told me that You would advise me. For so long I did not heed that but today, Your mood is encouraging me – it is reminding me of those words of Your father and encouraging me to approach You for spiritual advice.

Be pleased to advise me about what is spiritual truth. Who am I? What is this world? How can I find the proper direction of life? Who is the owner of this world and what is my duty towards Him? You are not an ordinary boy, so I want to know all these things from You, my child." Then from the lips of her son came this verse, given in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

satam prasangan mama virya-samvido

bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah

taj-josanad asy apavarga-vartmani

sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramisyati

Srimad Bhagavatam 3.25.25

Lord Kapila said, *satam prasangan mama virya-samvido* – “Talks about Me which are full of potency can only be found coming from the lips of My devotees. Not only lip-deep words, but words that have depth, spirit, power and that represent reality come from the lips of My real devotee. Such words are not shallow, but are surcharged with spirit, with life, and can enliven. *Bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah* – they satisfy both our ear and our heart and give a taste of spiritual joy – *rasayanah*. Their words are surcharged with the ecstasy of the spiritual world and colour our ear, our mind and our heart – physically, mentally and also on the plane of our soul. *Taj-josanad* – by hearing from the real source, from that real *sadhu*; *asv apavarga-vartmani* – we are led towards relief from this worldly life. By a gradual process, we attain these things: *sraddha ratir bhatir anukramisyati*: first *sraddha* – ever increasing faith; then *rati*, a slight taste; then we get real love – *bhakti*. *Anukramisyati* – by a gradual process we are taken towards the higher domain.”

In this way, the boy began to advise His mother, Devahuti. This Devahuti-nandana Kapila, was the son of Kardama Rsi, but there was another Kapila whose *sankhya* philosophy does not recognize God: it only analyzes the material elements, gradually eliminating everything of spiritual substance.

So, there are two Kapilas, both of whom gave *sankhya* philosophy: the Divine Son of Kardama Rsi and the other, Sankhya Kapila. Kapila, the son of Kardama and Devahuti gave what is known as *sankhya*, but He has given recognition to the Supreme Lord, *isvara*. However, the atheist Kapila claimed *isvara-asiddhe* – there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this world. That is his conclusion.

The *nyayikas* (logicians) say that there must be One who has created this world.

This world has been created so there must be someone who has done it. Their highest conclusion is that there must be a creator, and He is God, *Isvara*. But the atheist Kapila says, “No, there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this material world – *isvara-asiddhe*. His finding, his conclusion is that there is no necessity of a creator; automatically everything exists. Only two things are necessary: first, a particle of spirit, and second, matter. Matter and spirit combined, Siva and Sakti, have created this world. There are so many spiritual particles, like specks of sand or dust, and by their combination with

matter this world is going on automatically.

Once, while at the Madras Math, I met a gentleman from Madhupur who was a follower of this school of thought. He was an educated Bengali gentleman and I asked him, “What have you got from your *guru* – that Kapila?”

He said, “So many souls are there, *yata*, *jiva* and everyone is a *siva*, independent of this matter.”

I said, “You are satisfied with this explanation?”

“Yes, I am satisfied: *pasa baddho bhavej jivah pasa muktah sadasivah* – the soul while conditioned is *jiva*, and when liberated, then he is *siva*.”

I told him, “Where your philosophy ends, our philosophy – that of the *Bhagavat* School, begins.”

“How is it so?” he asked me.

“You will have to explain where these *sivas* exist. There are so many *sivas*, like particles of spiritual dust. But should we not think they must be living in some position and that there must exist some relationship between them? There are so many and some sort of relationship must be there between them and they must also stay somewhere – in some position, some plane. And how are they harmonized together, or are they each an independent unit, all fighting one another? If not, then what is their nature?”

“The *Bhagavat* has come to explain about the *mukta-jivas*, the liberated souls.

These souls, who were once diseased, are now free from that disease. In their healthy condition, what do they do? What is their position, their characteristic, their nature, their objective and their pastimes? We have to know that. So, *Bhagavatam* has given us an explanation.”

Devarsi Narada asked Vyasadeva, “Explain what is the normal, natural condition of the liberated souls who are not diseased.” And that has been given. There is a Centre and all function in connection with Him and are all harmonized together.

In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita*, the Lord says:

yat sankhyaih prapyate sthanam, tad yogair api gamyate

ekam sankhyam ca yoganca, yah pasyati sa pasyati

Bhagavad-gita 5.5

“He has true vision who can see that the *sankhya* and *yoga* systems are one and the same.” One person is trying to reach the ultimate goal by external elimination and the other by internal elimination. “This is body, this is mind, this is soul, then supersoul, and onwards.” The search is all within. The process of elimination is within. And by that he is trying to reach the core. And the other, by elimination of the elements of the external world (earth, fire, water, ether, air), he is trying to understand the origin.

That is *sankhya* – *neti, neti, neti* – “This is not it, this is not it, this is dependent, this is also dependent, this is not original, nor this, nor this. All are effects. Then what is the cause?” To inquire through the external process is *sankhya*, and the internal process is through *yoga* – *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dhyana, dharana, samadhi*. So, by elimination of the effect, we come in contact with the cause, from the gross we start towards the subtle and we reach more and more subtle planes in the causal direction.

This is the process in both *sankhya* and *yoga*. But in the beginning of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Sukadeva Goswami, who is speaking to Pariksit Maharaj, begins his talk by saying that these two – *sankhya* and *yoga* –and also *sva-dharma parinisthaya* (fulfilling one’s Vedic duty), can all give us liberation, but there is something more:

etavan sankhya-yogabhyam, sva-dharma-parinisthaya

janma labhah parah pumsam, ante narayana-smrtih

Srimad Bhagavatam 2.1.6

He says, *etavan*, so far, by these processes, we are told our liberation may be achieved: by *sankhya*, eternal elimination: by *yoga*, internal elimination and also by *sva-dharma parinisthaya*, discharging one’s duty as it is recommended in the *Veda*. To perform whatever is one’s respective duty as it is recommended without any special aim or objective, is *niskama* (action free from personal desire). Because it has been advised by the *sastra* as my duty in my present position, I

am doing it, but in a disinterested way, without any special end.

As a *brahmana*, I am told, “You must do these things,” so I am doing them. As a *ksatriya*, my duty is to keep the peace and control the evildoers: that is my duty and I am doing it. As a *vaisya*, I am advised to do such and such. Because it is advised in the *sastra*. I am doing my respective duty in a disinterested way, that is, without any special aim or interest. All these three processes – *sankhya*, *yoga* and *Vedic* duty – lead us to liberation.

But *janma labhah parah pumsam, ante narayana smrtih* – after we get relief from the external bondage then the fulfilment of our life is in remembering our Lord Narayana, the Creator, and our relationship with Him. We must get out of the net we are entangled in. After getting release from this entanglement, we must search out our proper relationship with the Prime Cause. Who are we in our relationship with Him? Here the *Bhagavata* begins:

etavan sankhya-yogabhyam, sva-dharma-parinisthaya

janma labhah parah pumsam, ante narayana-smrtih

Srimad Bhagavatam 2.1.6

Janma labhah means fulfilment of our existence, our birth: *labhah* means the gain, the fulfilment, the end. What is that end? *Ante narayana-smrtih* – our connection or re-connection with the Centre – that All-Harmonizing Centre.

That should be our goal. The *Bhagavatam* comes to tell us this. So many other *sastras* come to give us release from this external bondage; but with internal progress, after crossing the marginal plane, we get admission into the *paravyoma*, the special area – *Vaikuntha*. That is, we get visa for that land – *viraja*, *brahmaloka*, *bedhi*, *paravyoma*, *paya*. We catch the flow of the current going towards the Centre – that is the visa. *Sankhya yoga* and *sva-dharma parinisthaya* can give us the passport to get out of the land where we are living.

But after that, if we want to attain something, a visa is necessary.

Chapter 13 Self-Forgetfulness: The Peels Of Devotion

Even the Elements Struggle in this World

According to Indian medical authorities, in the body is air, bile and mucus, which correspond to air, fire and water – the three elements in the ether that influence the earth. Earth is mainly influenced by water, and water by heat, heat by air and all are fighting and struggling within ether. This is the nature of the material world. Then there is the mental world, the manifestation of mental energy, “I want this; I do not want that. I like this; I do not like that.” The intelligence gives direction to the mind: “Don’t take this – take that.” But it is all within the *ahankara*, the material ego. Above that is the soul, who experiences everything, good or bad. He is called *purusa*:

purusah sukha-duhkhanam, bhoktrtve hetur ucyate

Bhagavad-gita 13.21

“It is established that it is the conditioned living being, *purusa* himself, who is the responsible cause of the feelings of joy and sorrow which he experiences in this world.”

This is the difference between spirit and matter. Matter, called *prakrti*, is energy; but the soul, *purusa*, experiences good and bad – he is the person who feels good or bad, sorrow or happiness. He is of one substance and that which is felt, is another.

karya-karana-karttrtve, hetuh prakrtir ucyate

Bhagavad-gita 13.21

“Certainly in this impermanent world all movement occurs through the inherent quality of the predominated material nature, *prakrti*, which is responsible for both cause (the force of the senses) and effect (the material body). So, all activity we find here – all movement – is due to that material energy and the feeler of everything. The knower, the conceiver, is the soul. The soul is like the eye – an eye that can see anything and everything.

In *sankhya* philosophy, the *prakrti-purusa* relationship has been compared to that of a blind man and a crippled man. A crippled man may ride on the shoulders of a blind man. He who is moving (*prakrti*) is blind and he who is crippled who is on his shoulders (*purusa*), has got eyes to see and can guide.

The soul is ‘crippled’, he cannot move, but he can see. The blind man is the commander of the energy, who can move here and there; he can carry, but he is blind. In this way the soul is the knower, the feeler, the subjective existence, and the energetic aspect is that of the force, *prakṛti*. So, there is force and consciousness.

We are so much engrossed with force – we so much require the force, the energy – that we have forgotten that we are the feeler of that force! That ‘feeler’ is astonishing! If we try to understand our own self, we will be dumbfounded, “Oh – what is this? I am of such a nature? I have nothing to do with this world of immortality. I can live independently of this mortal world? Is it so?”

Further, we will be able to understand that there is supersoul, the oversoul. In the material world there are so many different planes: the world of heat, the world of water, the world of air, etc. Everything is evolving – from the subtle plane down to a gross plane such as stone or wood. Just as there is development in this direction in the material world, so in the subjective world, there is also development, but upwards – from the soul to the supersoul, then to super-supersoul (*bhagavan*); in this way there is development and it is infinite.

Yet, we are *tatastha* – marginal; the soul is in a marginal position between higher and lower energies, between the subtle side and the gross side. The upper side is eternal, conscious and happy; it is *sat-cit-ananda*, that is eternal, conscious and happy. Here, it is *asat, acit, nirananda*. It is *asat*, flickering and temporary – every minute it is dying; it is *acit*, unconscious, and *nirananda*, with no feeling of joy or happiness. These are the respective natures of this world and of that world.

If we want to have association with that world, we are informed that in the highest position, there is infinite beauty, love and ecstasy. That world can come down to us and we can be taken in as one of the Lord’s own family members.

We can live as a family member with the highest Entity of that world?

Mahaprabhu assured us it is possible. But possible only through affection; not by knowledge, not by mystic realization or any other power – No! By affection and love we can attract Him in such a way that we can be given recognition as a family member, a position very near to Him – to such an extent it is plausible!

tato mam tattvato jnatva, visate tad-anantaram

Bhagavad-gita 18.55

“After realizing My proper position, they enter there: that is, into My own special jurisdiction, into My family.” And *Bhagavatam* says.

mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.29.34

“They obtain such high recognition and this further qualifies them to live with Me eternally as My own. If they selflessly come forward to satisfy Me, leaving aside everything, this is *ananya-bhajana*. If they want Me alone and nothing else, then this is their future prospect.”

martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma

niveditatma vicikirsito me

tadamrtatvam pratipadyamano

mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.29.34

Sanatana Goswami has analyzed what is the proper meaning of this expression *atma-bhuyaya*: “My own” – they become “My own”. What is the meaning of ‘own’? He says it means to enter into His family. ‘Family’ in this context means a gradation from servant, to friends and their associates, to the filial affection group (the guardian group) and finally, the highest conceptual group – that of consorhood. There is one story I heard from my god-brother, Vaikanas Maharaj, who was a *brahmachari* scholar of Orissa. It was about an incident that occurred in recent history in connection with the Jagannath Temple at Puri where it was customary that no *khichari* used to be offered to the Lord.

Once, there was a raid by the Mohammedans on Orissa. One of the girls of the royal family was abducted and was used to serve the pleasures of the general by his loyal soldiers. He later left the state but that girl remained on the outskirts of some village or town and there, she gave birth to a child who was a great devotee. It was a very peculiar thing: the girl was also a devotee but somehow she had to undergo such a horrible experience. She gave birth to a child and he

lived on the outskirts of that town. When he grew up he used to cook *khichari* – rice and beans cooked together, boiled into a half-liquid consistency and he used to offer that to Jagannath from afar. By dint of his devotion, Jagannath would go there to accept that *khichari* offering in the late afternoon.

One day, the boy was perhaps late in his offering; Jagannath took the *khichari* but the time was then late for the temple offering. He had to run back to install Himself in His position in the temple and a particle of that *khichari* was still on His lips. The *pandas*, the *pujaris* noticed; “What is this? How has this happened? We can detect this is not the proper offering to Jagannath. Then, how is it here on His lips?” So, it was referred to the leader of the *pandas* and he also searched but he could not ascertain the cause. Then it was taken before the king, who also investigated, “Who has taken this food and smeared it on the mouth of Jagannath?”

Finally the priest who had been in charge at the time of the offering of food in the temple was apprehended: “You are responsible! You were in charge of the temple at the time of Jagannath’s offering. How has this impure thing come in His mouth? You must explain or you will be punished.”

The man was innocent and he said, “I do not know anything. I do not know a thing.”

When he was about to be punished, Jagannath came in a dream to the king as well as to the leading priest: “That man is innocent. Do not disturb him. On the outskirts of the town is My devotee. He offered that food to Me and I took it, but the time was late and I had to hurry back to occupy My position at the temple so My mouth was not cleansed. This is the name of that boy. He is living there. He is My devotee and I have taken his food there.”

It was as a result of the Mohammedan general’s exploitation of the princess that this devotee appeared. So, *Krsna-bhakti* – devotion to Krsna – does not care for the formality of purity or impurity by any worldly considerations. It is independent.

Krsna-bhakti is so powerful and does not care for anything. Jagannath accepted the offering of that boy who was considered to have the worst fate, a cursed fate.

That princess was abducted by the Mohammedans and thereafter, her issue came in the form of that boy – so he was considered to be the curse of the cursed. But

still, his offering attracted Jagannath so much.

The Inner Existence of us All

So, love is wonderfully situated above everything – surpassing all. Mahaprabhu asked us to accept the path of love, which means giving one’s heart, one’s self. It is so powerful – nothing else can attract Krsna. He is very greedy to eat this love, this *prema*. He lives on *prema*. He is the Lord of love. That love has its inner existence; it is the inner existence of all of us. He is Love personified and there is a tinge of that also within us. And, like ‘birds of a feather’, love likes love.

Once Mahaprabhu – at the time when He had conquered and captured the Kazi – was leading the *sankirtana* party and was feeling very tired. He came to Sridhar Pandit, the poor *brahmana* who used to sell plantains in the market to somehow meagrely earn his livelihood. Sridhar Pandit had a well and nearby, an iron pot that he used for drawing water. Mahaprabhu began to drink water from the well with the pot that had been left outside. All the devotees objected. “What are You doing? This pot is always kept outside and is very dirty. We are bringing a clean pot for your drinking water.” Mahaprabhu ignored them and continued drinking water from that iron pot. He commented. “This is the pot of My devotee Sridhar; it is purer than anything.”

In *Bhagavad-gita* (9.30) the Lord says: *api cet sudaracaro, bhajate mam ananya-bhak*

sadhur eva sa mantavyah, samyag vyavasito hi sah

“If a person is an unalloyed devotee who worships Me exclusively, having abandoned all other pursuits based on exploitation and renunciation, even if he commits some abominable action, he is to be considered saintly. He is cent-percent pure because his endeavours are completely on My behalf and his determination is fixed in that resolve.”

This is because one who has really surrendered to Krsna is accepted as “His own”. Such a surrendered soul should never be considered as impure – a transgressor. So, what is *bhajana*? It is a transaction of the heart, not of any formality. In Krsna devotion. *Krsna-bhakti*, the only consideration is the dedication of the heart. Krsna wants that, and not any external formality of the civilized or non-civilized world. In the case of Lord Ramachandra also we see that, although in the highest consideration. He is the director of moral laws –

niti – still, he could not contain Himself when offered something with devotion by an ‘untouchable’ lady. And that was after she had first taken it herself! After she had taken some of the sweet herself, at once she saved the remainder – what she considered most tasteful – she kept it for Lord Rama and He accepted that.

There is another incident that happened in Vidura’s house. While Vidura was out collecting alms, Krsna suddenly appeared as a guest at his house. Vidura’s wife received Him but there was nothing to offer – only some bananas. After seating Him nicely, she gave Him those bananas, but inadvertently she was offering the banana peels to Krsna and discarding the fruit on the ground. She was so bewildered – overwhelmed by the joy of finding Krsna suddenly present in her house – that she was discarding the fruit and giving Him the peels and He was eating them!

At that very moment, Narada and Vidura arrived and Vidura exclaimed, “What are you doing? You are leaving the fruit and giving the peels to my Lord.”

But Narada came to her relief: “She is bewildered but He who is eating is not at all disturbed! One might think He would say, ‘Oh, give Me the fruit. Why are you giving Me the peels?’ But He is eating the peels without any concern.”

Then Krsna explained, “I am eating neither the fruit nor the peels, but I am eating that which is devotion. Neither the peel nor the fruit can satisfy Me; I need neither the one nor the other. But I live on devotion, Narada.”

patram puspam phalam toyam, yo me bhaktya prayacchati

tad aham bhakty-upahrtam, asnami prayatatmanah

Bhagavad-gita 9.26

The Lord says, “I accept all those foodstuffs that are offered; but actually, it is not the food itself that I take. It is the purpose behind that offering – the ideal.

This is the very spirit of the thing I am concerned with and never the outward show. I am living in the inner world: so with food, it is the inner substance with which I am concerned – not the external appearance.”

Therefore, it is said, *bhavagrahi-janardana*h, “Lord Janardana sees the mood of devotion.” Devotion does not care for the ordinary rules and regulations of this

material world. Still, in our lower condition, we are advised to go on with *arcana*, and depending on our stage of realization, what we think to be pure, we offer. And what is impure, we reject. In the preliminary stage, this is necessary for our fortune (our cleansing), but as we advance, these external considerations are eliminated and the internal ones are given more and more importance.

Formality ignored for the sake of Precedence

There is another story that illustrates this. Vrajen Sil was a big scholar of Bengal – a scholar of philosophy so extraordinary that once, after he had delivered a lecture at the World Conference of Philosophy in Rome, the president of the meeting told him, “I took you to be Aristotle!” He was as respected as Aristotle, he was such a learned man. He had been a student of Scottish Church College in Calcutta and once was taking an examination there. While in the examination hall, he was given the questions and paper. He began to write his answers. Many questions were there but he became so engrossed in answering the first one that he forgot about the others. So deeply engaged he was in answering this single question that he spent the whole allotted time on it and ignored all the others.

When the bell rang and the examination time had expired, he was perplexed as to what to do. He had only dealt with the one question but he left his paper anyway and went away.

He was the brightest student in the student body but he was thinking that his name could not possibly be on the list of successful candidates because he had only answered one question out of possibly five or six. Still, he was stealthily coming to see if the list of successful candidates had been posted. Then one day he found that his name had appeared at the head of that list. He was perplexed.

“How is this? I only dealt with one question and I am at the head of the list?”

How is it possible?”

So, he approached the professor. “Sir, I had answered only one question; how is it possible that you have given me first place?”

“Oh, Mr. Sil, your answer is on the level of a research scholar, not an ordinary student. So, I gave you first place.”

This is like *raga-marga*, where the formal things are all ignored and the substance is drawn out. Although normally Mr. Sil should have been placed among the lowest candidates who failed, the professor was a judge of some boldness and thought, “Oh, his answer to just one question is of such high quality, this student can never be considered to be a failure.” Rather, he was given the highest position. So, love is such. It does not care for formality in its real judgement.

Chapter 14 Approach the Absolute – Walking on our Heads

It is better to be a fallen devotee than a *sahajiya*. Which is better – a poor man or a thief? One had money and lost it; the other is imitating that he is wealthy by committing wrong. One who is disconnected may be reconnected again soon, but a *sahajiya* means either that he had real connection with the truth and then became disconnected, i.e. chose the wrong path – or, that he is already engaged in the wrong path. So, which is the better position? Not to get the real thing or to get the wrong thing? Which is superior?

In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* it is mentioned that in *tama-guna*, the lowest position, one thinks ‘A’ to be ‘B’. In *raja-guna*, there is doubt whether this is real, or that is real. He cannot ascertain what is true. But to think that ‘A’ is ‘B’, and that ‘B’ is ‘A’ – that is the worst kind of error. They are misguided; *sahajiya* means misguided. They are accepting matter as consciousness so their position is more detrimental than that of those who have nothing or who have lost their connection with the real thing. In a similar way, the conclusion of the *mayavadi* section – who think that ‘merging’ into the formless *Brahman* is the highest end – is more dangerous because “a half-truth is worse than a lie.”

se duwera madhye vinayi tabu bhalo

mayavadi-sanga nahi magi kono kalo

Saranagati 27.3

“Association with those who are out-and-out sense enjoyers can never be so detrimental to one’s spiritual welfare as is the company of an impersonalist.”

If one admits, ‘I have no money,’ and another, who really has no money, shows some counterfeit currency and claims, ‘this is money’ – his condition is worse because he is engaged in falsehood.

So to become a *sahajiya* is worse. He is deceived; his attention is captured by – engrossed in – the wrong conception. Such a person had some conception for a time and became disconnected; but he may again easily re-establish his connection. The other has become captivated by a wrong conception so to convince him of the truth is more difficult because his mind is possessed and captured by the prejudice. The first person has no engagement; the engagement he had is gone. But the second person has mistaken one thing for another. He has taken matter to be divine and that is worse.

Once in my childhood, I heard this example from my teacher in school. He said that in America there was a good school of music with a peculiar admissions policy. If anyone had some previous knowledge of music, to attend the school, he was advised to pay double the standard tuition. But those who had no musical knowledge paid only the standard tuition. Why? Because those who had no previous knowledge do not know anything and therefore, can be taught easily.

But others who had some previous knowledge had to pay double because everything that they had previously learned had to be forgotten and only then would they be allowed to start learning in the proper way. They had to be taught first to forget their previous prejudices – their misconceptions of musical science – so for them, double charge!

So, it is something similar to that. In one case, no *bhakti*, no devotion; and in the other, in the name of devotion, some non-devotional conception has captured that man. That is imitation and worse – it is an offence. Srila Prabhupada said it is *vacanam*, to ridicule the devotees, Mahaprabhu, Rupa, Sanatana. It is to ridicule them because it confuses what is *prema* and what is *kama*. These activities are at opposite ends; and to accept *kama* in the name of *prema* is not only heinous and injurious to oneself, but it contaminates the whole atmosphere.

So Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur says

kame preme dekho bhai, laksanete bhedo nai

tabu kama ‘prema’ nahi hay

tumi ta' barile kama, mithya tahe 'prema' – nama

aropile kise subha hay

keno mana, kamere nacao prema praya

carma-mamsamaya-kama, jada-sukha avirama

jada-visayete sada dhay

Kalyana Kalpa-taru 18, 19

“Just give your attention to this, my brother: lust and love – their symptoms may appear similar – still, lust is not love. But you have accepted lust in the place of love, and if you give the certificate that ‘this is *prema*’, you only cheat yourself by making such a mistake. By mistaking one thing for another, you will never get anything auspicious. Lust is concerned with flesh and blood; but love is in the highest position of spiritual existence.”

Real Devotion is not so easy

So, they are opposites – like the North and South Poles. One is concerned with the body; the other is concerned with the Supersoul. A great Gulf lies between them. There is the ocean of dedication wherein the highest pinnacle of that dedication is *gopi-prema*. It exists where Krsna is. Yet what we see here is only imitation. Why the stern caution?

koti-mukta-madhye 'durlabha' eka krsna-bhakta Chaitanya charitamrta Madhya 19.148

“Out of many millions of liberated persons, a pure devotee of Krsna is very difficult to find.” We must consider all these things. Such dedication is possible only in the highest position of spiritual existence – the conscious area which is all-spiritual and not in any way concerned with flesh and blood. It is not concerned with the body.

The most heinous thing is that one will play the part of Krsna and a lady will play the part of a *gopi* and they will unite and in that way they will enjoy. To think this to be that – it is impossible! Any ordinary man will hate this. What to speak of the higher devotees, even an ordinary moral man is disturbed by such

news.

Rupa Goswami has given us the development:

adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sango 'tha bhajana-kriya

tato 'nārtha-nivṛttih syat tato nistha rucis tatah

Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu 1.4.15

“In spiritual development the beginning is faith (*sraddha*), then association with the devotees (*sadhu-sanga*), then engagement in service (*bhajana-kriya*), purging of faults (*anārtha-nivṛttih*), attainment of steadiness in devotion (*nistha*), spiritual taste (*ruçi*), firm attachment (*asakti*), transcendental emotion (*bhava*) and pure love of Kṛṣṇa (*prema*). These are the steps.”

And from another standpoint:

vaikunthera prthivy adi sakala cinmaya

Chaitanya charitamṛta Adi 5.53

“The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuntha are all spiritual.”

We must always remember, “I am the offspring of *tatastha-sakti* – the marginal potency. That is where I was born and I must go through that to *svarupa-sakti*, which is highly elevated – much higher than myself. There, the soil is of higher stuff than that of which I myself am made. The earth, the air, the water, the trees, birds, etc. – everything there is superior to me. And I am to enter there? It is not a small thing, not an easy thing. It is not within the power of the person who wants to go there to enter; rather it is completely dependent on the grace of his superiors – *guru-kṛpā*, *vaiṣṇava-kṛpā*.

We have to walk there on our head, not on our feet. All are *guru*; the soil is *guru*; the entire paraphernalia is *guru* – superior. I am made of a lower stuff and that plane is of higher substance so it is impossible to enter there at my own whim.

To approach that direction as far as *mukti*, liberation, may be easy. Thereafter, we can only be drawn by their grace. It is not a matter of right that anyone can enter that realm. It is only the wholesale, cent-per-cent grace of a child of that soil

which can take us there. Just as in court there is a guarantor – someone who stands as a guarantee for the subject, so some agent of that soil will take the risk and bring me there. So without their grace, *vaisnava-krpa*, *guru-krpa*, *bhagavata-krpa*, we cannot enter there.

No right – all grace. That grace can take me there. From our side, we have no right. I am a child of the marginal potency but there the whole substance – everything – is made of higher stuff than my own existence. I have my existence as a person and they are also all persons, but they are of an existence superior to me. How then can this person stand on the head of those? Only for their service can he enter at their feet! In any other way it is inconceivable and impossible.

This principle is mentally difficult to accept, what to speak of actually entering there. This verse gives us an indication of the difficulty involved: *bahunam janmanam ante, jnanavan mam prapadyate*

vasudevah sarvam iti, sa mahatma sudurlabhah

Bhagavad-gita 7.19

“After many births one who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, Vasudeva, realizing that it is I who am both the source and substance of all that be. Such a great soul is extremely rare.”

As well,

muktanam api siddhanam, narayana parayanah

sudurlabhah prasantatma, kotisv api maha-mune

Srimad Bhagavatam 6.14.5

“Oh great sage, out of millions of souls who are liberated and free from ignorance, and out of the many millions of *siddhas* who have nearly attained perfection, there is hardly one pure devotee of Narayana. Only such a devotee is completely satisfied and peaceful.”

It is easy to think of – extremely hard to attain. No right can be established there; it is not a matter of right that we can go there so the ‘right-seeker’ will be totally frustrated. We must prepare for “all risk – no gain.” But if somehow we can

reach there, it will be “all gain – no risk.”

So, to become a *Vaisnava* proper is almost impossible. It is only a matter of grace from that level that we can go there: there is nothing we can do from our side. Only with complete surrender, complete self-forgetfulness, complete dedication to the interest of that place can we hope to be taken there:

vaikunthera prthivy-adi sakala cinmaya

mayika bhutera tathi janma nahi haya

Chaitanya charitamrta Adi 5.53

“The earth, water, fire, air and ether of *Vaikuntha* are all spiritual. Material elements are not found there.”

Uddhava is a devotee of such high quality that he prays, “If I can be a creeper there, I shall consider my fortune to have reached its highest extent” In Vrndavana, the creeper has an exalted value. It is of such high value that even Uddhava is overcome. Uddhava – about whom the Lord says, “You are My most favourite devotee: I love you even more than My own Self.” And that Uddhava is aspiring to take birth as a creeper there in Vrndavana. This is not mere hyperbole. When Uddhava is aspiring to be a shrub, to be some grass there, then how are we to prepare ourselves that we shall walk over that place? I shall have to walk over the head of Uddhava! So, how much higher a conception must that place be?

And the *sahajiyas* – they are ridiculous! By imitation, here in the plane of flesh and blood, they think they will achieve that? They are the worst enemies! By imitating in this way, not only are they themselves going to hell, but they are attracting so many others there as well. They are not conscious of the facts – of ‘what is what’. So they have got their hated position in society; the general society has got hate for them, those *babajis*.

But we have to put faith in our Guru Maharaj who said, “It is my misfortune. I could not find a single *Vaisnava* in this *Vraja-mandal*.” Pressing his hand to his forehead he said, “It is my misfortune that I could not find a single *Vaisnava* in this great, holy place of *Vraja-mandala*.” That was his conclusion.

And after he had performed *Vraja-mandala-parikrama*, he said about one *babaji*,

who was generally recognized as the best of the *Sahajiya Vaisnavas* as their leader: “He is a *kanistha-adhikari*. He may be considered as a beginner – to have admission into the infant class.” That man was considered unanimously as a *siddha-babajī* – to have attained the highest position among them. Yet Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur said, “He has got admission into the primary class.” In writing – in the *Gaudiya-patrika* newspaper, he stated this. And we are trained accordingly and consciously – not with blind faith. He explained to us what is what; we tried to follow his direction and we have also come to such conclusions.

Step by step we must approach the highest point mental concoction, imitation.

Imitation is the worst. It is hateful – filthy. If in the name of that highest love, we represent this fleshy concoction with the body and the mind – then that is the most hateful thing. We must try to avoid it with our utmost will and energy.

Srila Kaviraj Goswami describes, *vaikunthera prithivy-adi sakala cinmaya* – the elements of that *Vaikuntha* world are all-spiritual and the scientific survey of that land is possible to the soul’s eye. We must understand that – how it is true. And for that we must first understand what is the *tatastha* region: what is *viraja*, what is *brahmaloka*.

But we are in such a material position that we cannot even understand this lower process:

indriyani parany ahur, indriyebhyah param manah

manasas tu para buddhir, buddher yah paratas tu sah

Bhagavad-gita 3.42

“What is the soul? We cannot follow. We cannot understand what is our own soul. There is the world – we conceive it. We perceive it through our senses so they must be higher. The mind receives the experience of the world through the senses. Above the mind is the faculty of judgment within us. Above that is the soul proper. And then we approach the Super-soul area – through *viraja*, *brahmaloka* and eventually we reach *Vaikuntha*.” There are so many layers to cross, but who is to cross? – Our own soul. We cannot even find him – our own soul! We are far away from that conception in a hopeless position. Then we say the highest conception of the *Paramatma* world is in our fist? That is heinous!

First we must feel our own soul. What is our real existence? What is the identity of our spiritual position? Then, that soul will have to go higher and higher. By crossing more and more valuable planes he must go up. But first he must feel his own identity.

So, the *sahajiyas*, the imitationists, should be considered the enemy. Like Quisling (a famous Norwegian Army officer of the second world war who sold out to the Nazis), they are *jana-satru*, the enemy who has sprung up at home – the enemy within. This kind of imitation is the worst. Ordinary imitation may be bad, but imitation of the Highest Reality is repugnant and must be rejected because what is Supreme is being exploited in such a low, mean way. That is *sahajiya*.

We cannot see our own soul. That is our position. Absorbed in this gross matter of exploitation we cannot even know what is our mind – of what substance it is made. Then, how can one understand what is intelligence, *buddhi*, the faculty of judgment within us, or beyond that, the soul – or ultimately, the realm of the Super-soul?

Yet we are living in the mundane world and imagining, “I have got the Lord of my dreams. I have got it all within my fist!”

Chapter 15 Knowledge which is not to be abandoned

Sometimes we may be misguided, led to believe that we must not study the devotional books. Therefore we may think, “To analyze, to know – that is not part of devotion. That is not necessary: It is knowledge, *jnana*, that is anti-devotional.”

Thinking in this way, we shall go on taking the Holy Name, and wherever there is some explanation being given about the devotional school, we shall try to avoid it. But that is not always best, because by hearing from the proper source, we get the kind of knowledge that gives us impetus to go on in our *sadhana*.

In *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta*, Srila Krsnadas Kaviraj Goswami says, *siddhanta baliya*, we should discuss the *siddhanta* (perfect conclusions of devotion).

Sanatana Goswami is the *acharya* of *siddhanta*. One may challenge, “What is the necessity of knowing *siddhanta* – what is what? I shall go on chanting the Name and wherever there is any class being given to explain *Srimad Bhagavatam* or *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta*, I shall avoid it. That is knowledge: *jnane prayasam udapasya* – ‘One should totally abandon the unnecessary endeavour of gaining knowledge by discussing empirical philosophical Truths.’”

(*Srimad Bhagavatam* 10.14.3)

But the *jnana* mentioned in this verse does not describe that sort of knowledge that gives us a real conception of what is the devotee, and what is God.

That ‘knowledge’ appears similar to *jnana* externally, but if it is coming from a genuine source, it is another type – another substance.

The warning about *jnana* is given because anyone may give any kind of interpretation of the revealed scriptures. It is not that we should try to know anything and everything – whatever anyone will say we shall run there to learn something. But when there is any revelation coming through a real agent who is higher than us, we should be very earnest to hear. That will consolidate our position and help us to go on – to progress in our *sadhana*.

Knowledge which is Bhakti-siddhanta

We should not reject as ‘knowledge’ the following *siddhanta*: Who is Krsna and how is He *svayam-bhagavan*; who is Narayana; where are the 24 layers of misconception; where is Vaikuntha, Goloka; who is Baladeva; what are the different *rasas*.

If I say, “Oh, no – this is all *jnana*; dismiss it and take the Name.” That is foolishness. It should be considered as indolence or idleness. We should invite that knowledge which will enhance our faith more profoundly. One should welcome such discussions. The Lord Himself says:

mad citta mad-gata-prana, bodhayanatah parasparam

kathayantas ca mam nityam, tusyante ca ramanti ca

Bhagavad-gita 10.9

“The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to

My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss always enlightening one another and conversing about Me.”

In the association of *sadhus*, to discuss about Him from different standpoints is not ‘knowledge’ to be abandoned; rather, it should spontaneously and naturally be encouraged. It is called *istha-gosthi*: *gosthi* means ‘combination’ and *istha* means ‘desirable company’. In that association, we must talk about Him. That is a necessary part of devotion.

And when *bhava-bhakti* (true devotional feeling) awakens, automatically these things will come:

ksantir avyarthā-kalatvam viraktir mana-sunyata

asa-bandhah samutkantha nama-gane sada rucih

asaktis tad-gunakhyane pritis tad vasati-sthale

ityadayo ‘nubhavah syur jata-bhavankure jane

Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.2.25/26

“When the need of ecstatic emotion for Kṛṣṇa fructifies in the heart of a devotee, the following symptoms naturally manifest in his behaviour. He feels forbearance; he doesn’t like to waste any time; he is detached from the mundane; he is free from pride; he lives in full hope; he is always eager to serve; he always has a taste for chanting the Lord’s Name, he loves to tell of the divine qualities of the Lord; he loves the Holy Abode of the Lord. These nine are called *anubhava* – subordinate signs of ecstatic love.”

If a *sadhu* spontaneously out of his own accord is expressing so many qualities of Kṛṣṇa, and we go away, losing the benefit of that – it is suicidal. Rather, we need attachment for that – *asaktih*. “Oh, the good qualities of Kṛṣṇa are being explained through this agent; I must try to give my ear to that.”

Otherwise, why has the ear been created? It has been created only to receive tidings of Him. The ear and the brain have been created for that purpose only and both must have their fulfilment in *kṛṣṇa-katha*, *hari-katha*. What is the purpose of *Gita*? The *Bhagavata*? What is *maya*? What is *svarupa-sakti*? What is real knowledge and what is misconceived, apparent ‘knowledge’? All

these things we must know to a certain extent because to avoid what is undesirable and to accept what is desirable presupposes some sort of knowledge at every step of our progress.

Jnane prayasam udapasya, to abandon fruitless knowledge-seeking does not mean that we must not talk about Krsna amongst ourselves or that when a *sadhu* is explaining about the Lord's *nama*, *rupa*, *guna*, *lila* (names, forms, qualities and pastimes) then we should flee from that place. It is not like that. By *jnana* – in the sense used here – is meant the teachings of *sankhya* of the following: atheist Kapila; schools of Patanjali *yoga*; Jaimini (*karma-mimamsa*); the Buddhist school, etc.

The advice to avoid them is also meant for the beginner but the preacher will have to come in contact with everything – to relegate them to their proper place.

And also sometimes *jnana*, knowledge which is necessary, can come from within. There is a stage of devotion when the necessary knowledge comes from within automatically. There is a stage of *bhakti* where things occur in this way – it is revelatory. Through revelation we can understand. It comes without any study, being supplied internally by *caitya-guru*. Sometimes knowledge of devotion may come to help us; but generally it will be by hearing from the lips of the devotees.

So the plane, the conception of Krsna in Vrndavan, is not lacking in *cit*, in knowledge. *Cit* means *cetana*, that is consciousness – “to know”. It is not in want of grandeur and awe such as is found in *Vaikuntha*. But when *ananda* takes precedence over *cit*, then it is advised, “Don't endeavour much through knowledge.” There is *sat-cit-ananda* and by *cit*, by the faculty of knowing and understanding, we cannot achieve everything. But everything comes automatically to us by service. In service, there is also knowledge – a department of knowledge – and that develops automatically.

Chapter 16 The Ontology of Spiritual Struggle

When a devotee is trying to conquer his senses – when he is trying to conquer the influences of *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *matsarya* (lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion and envy) – at that time, he cannot avoid a struggle.

Progress means a struggle of different kinds and that happens in the stage of *madhyama-adhikara*. Generally, that is the time of difficulties. In *kanistha-adhikara*, in the lower stage, one does not concern himself with the stage of his progress, i.d., if he is getting devotion or not. With a peaceful mind, he is engaged in *archana* (deity worship) or whatever may be his service. But when the stage of *madhyama-adhikara* commences, a real struggle begins in one's life. He will have to adjust many things, *laukiki vaidhiki vapi*, not only regarding his devotional life as inculcated in the scriptures (*vaidhiki*), but also his social position (*laukiki*) – his ordinary dealings, his quarrels and his relationships with society and education.

Usually, the tendency to preach comes in this stage; he wants to extend himself to try to remove the difficulties in the environment and convert it to his purpose.

The *madhyama-adhikara*'s life is one of struggle. And when he reaches *uttama-adhikara*, then he becomes peaceful. He sees that everywhere things are going well according to the will of Krsna. He can see the will of Krsna very easily and that His backing is everywhere. So he has not much to do or to struggle for.

sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavan atmanah

bhutani bhagavatya atmany esa bhagavatottamah

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.45

“On the topmost platform of devotional service, one sees within everything, the Soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna. He sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.”

But when one is living in the plane of ignorance (of misconception) it is necessary for him to find harmony because he is seeing both things – *maya* and *isvara*. He wants to install *isvara* – God, Godliness, God-consciousness – and he tries his hardest to remove misconception. Therefore, *madhyama-adhikara* is a period of struggle; it is in the stage of *sadhana-dasa*, the stage of spiritual practice.

Sadhana-dasa – the Stage of Spiritual Struggle

As a result of *sukrti* – spiritual fortune due to devotional service rendered

knowingly or unknowingly – the soul first acquires *sraddha*, divine faith. Then with *sadhu-sanga*, one gets the association of the real devotees. That is the stage of hearing, *sravana-dasa*, then *varana-dasa*, one accepts the principle, the teachings, the path of devotion; then comes *sadhana-dasa*, the stage of practice and this stage is full of struggle. Then, in the *apana-dasa* stage of advanced realization, one feels peaceful in *bhava-bhakti*, pure love of God.

And again, when he is already in *lila*, situated in the transcendental pastimes, there is another struggle but that is of another kind. In *Vraja*, *Vrndavan*, there is also competition, a struggle, Yasoda will think, “How to control this naughty child? I fail to do so. I cannot manage Him!” – there is struggle. Still, that is produced by *yoga-maya*. It comes in *prema-bhakti*, *ahi bhavati premna*, and it is dynamic in character – not static. Where the plane is dynamic, there must be struggle. In some way or other, it is present as competition in the plane of *lila*.

In the *sakhya-rasa*, there is play where there are two parties; on one side is Krsna; on the other side is Balaram. Each wants to be victorious. That is also a struggle but purely of another character, from another domain – it is transcendental play.

In *madhurya-rasa* there are several parties as well. Here is Radharani’s party; there is Chandravali’s party and so many others and the servitors of each party have to manage for their own interest – the interest of their mistress. Dynamic character means a kind of struggle – a sweet struggle. In this world there is also a struggle, but it is bitter. When we have to struggle to remove nescience and invite real science – to go from misunderstanding to pure knowledge in the beginning stages – that struggle is very bitter. It is not only tasteless, but also sometimes painful. But when we enter the higher realm, the struggle becomes more or less sweet.

The Struggle in the Kama-Rupa Group

Lila must mean a kind of struggle. There are differences; there is conquering.

Sometimes they are taking the help of deception – one party is deceiving the other. However, everything is *aprakṛta*, *prakṛta-vat*, super-transcendental though it appears just like ordinary worldly affairs.

As well, something like immorality is there; *niti rahita*, the moral laws are being crossed for the satisfaction of Krsna. This is a very high conception: to do

anything and everything for Him. The *kama-rupa* group is prepared to do anything and everything for Krsna and for that kind of service, they are under no law. Krsna is the origin and master of law, and for Him anything can be done crossing the existing laws of society.

ajnayaivam gunan dosan mayadistan api svakan

dharman santyajya yah sarvan mam bhajeta sa ca sattamah

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.11.32

Those who are ready to cross even the *sastric* orders, which have been given to us for our own benefit, for the service of Krsna, are really the highest class of devotee. Law, which has been established by the Lord, is for the ordinary people; however, a special section exists who are ready to cross over that law only for their exclusive service to the Lord.

sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja

aham tvam sarva-papebhyo, moksaisyami ma sucah

Bhagavad-gita 18.66

“Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, do not despair.”

Many rules and rites of *varnasrama-dharma* are given for our benefit, but that is when we are in lower stage. And in the higher stage, “crossing the law, I shall serve Him” – that is faith! Suppose it is forbidden to enter the harem of the king; the general law states that it is forbidden to all and none should transgress that.

But if one perceives some urgent service is necessary, if he suspects there is some danger to the king’s life and crosses the law at his own risk entering the harem for the benefit of the king – to save him from an intruder – he is an honoured servant. Similarly, there is this particular section of devotees who are ready to cross over the law for the Lord’s satisfaction. Those who can know the interest of Krsna are a special group; they are highest among the devotees. Law is meant for the general public, but the sweet will of Krsna is above all law.

Where there is life, there is struggle; where there is progress, there is struggle;

where there is *lila*, play, there is struggle, though of a different kind. One is sweet, the other painful. In the lower stage it is a little painful for us to cut the tie of attraction to this world; but when some permanent relationship is established with the upper world – when we have regained that – then to move forward is happy. Since progress means a struggle, that struggle will continue throughout the whole stage of *madhyama-adhikara*.

Then, in *uttama-adhikara*, externally the life may become peaceful. And again, in the higher stage, in *vilasa* (pastimes), crossing *santa-rasa* which is a peaceful stage, again the struggle begins but that is a sweet struggle. It is arranged not by *maha-maya* but by *yoga-maya* – it is carrying us to the centre. The very land there is of *rasa*; it is *rasamaya*, full of sweet taste, the land of nectar – *amrtamaya-loka*. The difference between the two kinds of struggle is something like the experience of a man working in a hot desert or in a good, healthy atmosphere – or the work of a diseased man and that of a healthy man.

There is an expression, “Ignorance is bliss.” One who is in ignorance is living in peace because he does not know anything – he is unconscious. That is also peaceful because there is no consciousness so, no pain. When a patient is in pain, the doctor wants to render him unconscious by some injection. That unconsciousness is ignorance and it also has some kind of a taste, *tama-guna*.

But that is not real peace. There is no feeling – it is zero. But zero is also of an infinite character. Infinity and zero are similar. If we add zero to zero, it comes to zero. If we subtract zero from zero it is also zero; zero divided by zero again zero. In the same way, if infinity is added to, subtracted from or divided by infinity, it all comes to infinity. So, ‘ignorance is bliss’. If there is no consciousness, there is no question of pain. It is like the existence of a stone.

The extreme liberationists reach such a stage as that of a fossil or a stone. They want peace so much, they are granted a stone-like state of peace.

ye ‘nye ‘ravindaksa vimukta-maninas

tvayy asta-bhavad avisuddha-buddhavah

arhya krcchena param padam tatah

patanty adho ‘nadrta-yusmad anghrayah

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.2.32

“Oh Lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe penances and austerities to achieve the higher position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence remains impure. They simply speculate in various ways and do not seek the means to take shelter of You. Because they have no regard for Your lotus feet, they simply fall down from their position of imagined superiority into material existence again.”

To those who are determined to be ‘one’ with Him, this heavy punishment is finally given and they are thrown down to take such an existence – that of a stone. In such a state, they can live in peace for lakhs, crores or millions of years. They can become the Himalayas, a stone or a tree. In the *Puranas* we find examples of personalities who were cursed to such a fate and in that state, there is also a sort of peace – ‘ignorance is bliss.’

And those who have gone up to *santa-rasa*, they also find some peace. But entering *Vaikuntha*, again there is movement and that is for service. In *dasya-rasa* there is activity – there is struggle. They are serving the order, “Do this, go here, give this to them.” There is so much movement and movement means struggle but that struggle brings peace. That kind of struggle begins in *dasya-rasa*. And *santa-rasa* is the marginal position and in that position of non-activity, there is also peace but it is of a lower quality.

atmaramas ca munayo, nirgrantha-apy urukrame

kurvanty ahaitukim bhaktim, ittham-bhuta-guno harih

Srimad Bhagavatam 1.7.10

“All varieties of *atmaramas* (those who take pleasure in the *atma* or spiritual self), especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendental qualities and therefore, can attract everyone including even liberated souls.”

That is the marginal position. It is only on the threshold of service proper:
brahma-bhuta-h prasana-atma, na socati na kanksati

samah sarvesu bhutesu, mad-bhaktim labhate param

Bhagavad-gita 18.56

“The spotlessly pure-hearted and self-satisfied soul who has attained to his conscious divine nature neither grieves nor craves for anything. Seeing all beings equally, he gradually achieves supreme devotion, *prema-bhakti*, unto Me.”

So, the marginal position is a position of so-called peace. But we find dynamic

“peace in struggle” as it appears externally in *dasya*, *sakhya* and *vatsalya-rasa* as well as in *madhurya-rasa* and its subdivisions, *svakiya* and *parakiya*. Suppose the *madhurya-rasa* servitors are to meet with Krsna on a dark night in the forest.

On the surface it appears they have to struggle in so many ways. Being given the sign, hearing the particular flute-song of Krsna, they will have to pass through the jungle to be somewhere at a particular time. That appears like an ordinary struggle, but it is the sweetest movement.

If ‘struggle’ means ‘movement’, then there, on that plane, where movement is so sweet, struggle is a high thing. But if we think that struggle means something painful, then that struggle must be of the lower plane. Here struggle is pain producing; all movement, all endeavours here, produce only pain. On the higher plane, there is also movement, but that movement produces sweetness, just as sandalwood when rubbed, produces a sweet scent. There is struggle for the purpose of producing sweetness.

The Sweetest Songs tells the Saddest Tales

On the highest level, they are also very busy struggling. But that struggle is producing nectar that they taste. To struggle also means to be busy; everyone there is so busy – more that we can ever conceive. They are so active but their activity is not painful – it produces peace. Here, trying to do away with our unholy attraction to the mundane, we experience a painful struggle. But as the English poet Shelly wrote, “Our sweetest songs tell of the saddest thought.” That kind of struggle also gives us peace. When a beginner in devotion starts to become detached from his mundane environment, then to leave it is painful but he also gets a kind of peace.

yad anucarita-lila-karna-piyusa-viprut

sakrd adana-vidhuta-dvandva-dharma vinastah

sapadi grha-kutumbam dinam utsrjya dina

bahava iha vihanga bhiksu-caryam caranti

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.47.18

A devotee leaves his family and his family is crying and wailing; he also feels pain because of their anguish. But still he feels a kind of peace of a higher quality so he can bear the apparent pain of separation from his family life. When he is giving up his home and his family, he feels some painful reaction – but beyond that, in his heart of hearts, he feels some bright prospect. When a man goes to a foreign country to earn some money, he leaves his family and so he feels some pain, but at heart he also realizes that he is going to bring in money that will satisfy him and enable him to enjoy.

In a similar way, when a person goes to leave this world, his association with misconception, apparently, or outwardly, he feels pain on account of what he is doing. But at heart, he gets some hope of a bright future. With that strength, he can go on.

So, when we have some attraction for this mischievous world and we try to leave it, at that stage we struggle – a painful struggle. But still, beyond that, we see a bright hope of some unparalleled nectarine taste of life.

So struggle does not always mean pain. Up to a certain stage it is painful and that is due to *maya* – misconception. And we find also the symptoms of pain in *Krsna-lila*, but that is not real pain. It is apparent pain; it only seems so. Krsna said that He would come to a particular *kunja* and Radharani with Her party went there but He did not come. That is called *kalahatarita* – mistiming – that is, being let down by the lover or beloved. And there are so many other situations, like *mana* (jealousy). All things are painful, but as Krsnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes, describing *Krsna-prema*; *bahya visa-jvala haya, bhitare anandamaya*, externally there appears to be great pain but the heart is overflowing with blissfulness. So, “The sweetest songs are those which tell of our saddest thoughts.”

Externally it is sad, but internally it is sweet.

When we take the Name, in the beginning we think it our duty to count so many rounds and sometimes it is painful. But when we get a taste for the Name, then our inner tendency incites us to take the Name more and more – not that as a duty we will somehow have to finish sixteen rounds. When we acquire *ruci*, inner taste for that particular service, it is happy. Until and unless we acquire that position, there must be some pain.

As long as we do not have that taste and we are doing that service as a duty, we will feel some pain. So *sadhana-dasa* is a little painful on the whole. Then in *apana-dasa* – it becomes sweet. Underground, of course, sweetness is everywhere; otherwise why should a person be tempted to approach the spiritual path? It can be only for the hope of sweetness. But still, if we want to see by analysis, then the process is: *sravana-dasa*, hearing; then *varana-dasa*, accepting; then *sadhana-dasa*, practicing. Up to this point it is a little painful.

Then *apana-dasa*, realized devotion; and finally *prapanna-dasa*, full self-surrender. And what pain exists is only apparent; substantially it is All-Sweet.

Chapter 17 Caught Within A Subtle Storm

The Prejudice of our Past Experience

Caught within – a subtle storm has covered with dust the eye of our soul. Our inner vision densely covered with dust is born from many different misconceptions of separate interest, causing us to ignore the universal interest.

This mental cover produced from prejudices of provincial interests keeps us from seeing reality.

visaya-dhulite kemane se paratattva paiya dekhite

“How will a person be able to read the universal wave when his mind is fully engrossed with local interest of different kinds? How can one detect the universal interest – the universal wave? Only one who has fully eliminated all kinds of local interest and is eager to understand the universal wave. He can see it clearly.”

Arthesv abhijnah svarat: what is the purpose of the movement of this world?

The answer is clear – it is “For itself”. Reality is for itself – not to satisfy many but to satisfy One. All the waves are meant to satisfy that One, and if we can put ourselves on that level we can understand the truth; otherwise not – in which case, we engage in thievery.

We are far from the truth when we cannot see that everything – all waves are flowing towards the satisfaction of the One – *svayam bhagavan*. We are labouring under a deception, we are deceivers who are not just deceiving ourselves but the world as well. Everyone – all the *baddha-jivas* are more or less cheaters. That is our position and we must be relieved of such misunderstanding, self-deception and environmental cheating if we are to be placed in our proper position.

How to Read Within Myself?

Thereafter we may go there and find that universal wave - actually see it – have darsan. *Darsan* means ‘to see’; but how to see? That must be learned. What to see? How to read what is going on within myself and outside myself? That is proper understanding – proper education. A proper understanding of one’s own self as well as the environment is proper education. That education must be *Vedic*. The standard must be drawn from outside this area of *maya* – this area of misunderstanding; the standard must be drawn from the perfect realm through *Veda* – revealed truth.

We must accept revealed truth and bid farewell to so-called scientific knowledge and other kinds of perceptions that are all erroneous – based on false experience and false information. “It belongs to me; it belongs to him; it belongs to them.”

This calculation is all false. We have to get wholesale relief from this mania!

And what’s more, we must not only get relief from this misconception, from misunderstanding the external waves, but we must attain a positive position – to learn to understand the wave, the vibration of *Goloka*. *Goloka* is the most universal, most fundamental plane. If we can harmonize ourselves with that plane, we will be led to *Vrndavan* or *Nabadwip* and there, we shall see things as they are.

Some are more attracted to *Krsna-lila*; others are more attracted to *Gaura-lila* and others have an inclination to be accommodated in both places. In *Krsna-lila* also, some are attracted to Radharani’s camp, some to Krsna’s camp and some

are holding the middle position. We find this kind of diversity – divisions, and that is necessary for the *lila* by the arrangement of *yoga-maya*. So in the highest plane, we find two kinds of pastimes: *Krsna-lila* and *Gaura-lila* and they are each of the same value. In one there is transaction within a ‘limited camp’ and in the other, there is transaction along with a tendency towards distribution to others. But they are of the same value. That which is being distributed and is being enjoyed, are one and the same value of ecstasy, sweetness, love and beauty. Some are more attracted to the one *lila* and some are more attracted to the other. Within *Gaura-lila*, we also find those like Narahari Sarkara and his followers who were more given to Krsna than Gauranga, and others who are more inclined towards Gauranga than to Krsna. This is all by the grant of the Lord, the Supreme Will – His *lila*.

In *Gaura-lila*, Gadadhara Pandit is holding the helm – everything belongs to him. Still, he has to admit, he has been dispossessed – that Gauranga has taken everything! He is exhaustively dedicated to Gauranga. So Srila Kaviraja Goswami says: *teho laksmi-rupa, tara sama keha nai*, that he represents the main potency of Gauranga, and no one is to be compared to him. This is the conclusion of Srila Kaviraja Goswami about Sri Gadadhara. He is *gaura-premamaya*, the embodiment of Sri Gaura’s love.

Gadadhara Das represents the halo of Radharani but Gadadhara Pandit represents Her mood, Her nature – Her heart. It is as if Mahaprabhu has taken away Gadadhara Pandit’s soul and the body is still standing. That is the position of Gadadhara Pandit; he is quite empty and following Mahaprabhu. He is not full in himself. Something, the most important thing, is his heart has been taken away by Mahaprabhu. He has no other alternative but to follow Him. He is wholly given to Mahaprabhu. Gadadhara Pandit’s position, the part he played, was something like that of Radharani. Her heart was stolen by Krsna – the empty body still standing. *Radha-bhava-dyuti-subalita naumi Krsna-svarupam*: He was fully engrossed in the conception of Sri Gauranga. Gauranga had taken everything from him so he had no other alternative. He was fully engrossed – completely captured by Him.

The Predominated Moiety of the Whole

We find his activity throughout his whole life was like this. Of the other devotees, some were ordered to go to *Vrndavan*. Still others were allowed to go there, but though Gadadhar Pandit wanted to visit *Vrndavan* with Mahaprabhu

Himself, he was denied: “No, you won’t go.”

When Jagadananda Pandit asked to go there, Mahaprabhu, with hesitation, granted him permission, “Yes, go there, but move always under the guidance of Rupa and Sanatana.” He also gave him some special instructions: “Do this, and this, and don’t do that.” But Gadadhara Pandit was not allowed to go there.

He was the representation of Srimati Radharani Herself, yet his peculiar position was such: the Queen of *Vrndavana*, but now transferred to *Nabadwip*. His position had become just the opposite; he could not enter *Vrndavan*! He prayed for permission, but Mahaprabhu did not give it. He said, “No, stay and live here.” And he had to do so. Sri Gadadhar Pandit represents the predominated moiety of the Whole. The Whole consists of predominating and predominated moieties, and he represents the predominated half. He is one half of the Absolute Truth.

In the teachings of Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur, whose preaching was inspired by Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Sriman Mahaprabhu, we also find all the substance that is present in that plane of vibration. These two personalities, Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, are our great *Gurus* – our guides. By offering worship to them we can sow the seed of our highest benefit. By the grace of that great Guru Maharaj, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad, we have been able to understand this.

And Bhaktivinod Thakur, though generally has his own position as understood from the consideration of the disciple, Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur has seen Srimati Radharani in him: a ‘relative’ vision. He once said that, “Radharani represents the full play of *asta-nayika*” – the eight characteristics of the heroine. We see that they are all perfectly represented in Her. In other places we may find partial representations of them, but we find them fully manifest only in Her.

He said, “I see my *Gurudeva* as Guna-manjari and in that *manjari* form, he has some partial representation of Radharani. But if I attempt to look more deeply, I find him identified fully with Her; the eight kind of qualities displayed in the service of Krsna (*asta-nayika*) are to be found there. If I look at him with my head a little more erect, I can see that he is one with Radharani. *Acharyam mam vijaniyat*: know the *Acharya* as Myself. If I give more attention to this *sastric* rule and try to search out the meaning, I find that Radharani comes to take Her

place there, in the position of my *Gurudeva*.” In this way he has seen in Bhaktivinoda Thakur the fullest representation of the cult of Sri Gauranga.

Continuous Pastimes in Nabadwip-Dham

This realization is expressed in his poem where he says that he saw Svarup Damodar Goswami in Gaura Kisora Das Babaji Maharaj, and Sri Gadadhar Pandit in Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur. In one place he has written: *gadadhara-din dhari paiyacche gaura-hari*, that he has accepted the day of the disappearance of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur to be identified with that of Sri Gadadhar Pandit. In another place, in his poem at the conclusion of his *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta* commentary, he has written. “Here in *Nabadwip-Dham*, the eternal pastimes are going on continuously: only those who have obtained that deep vision can perceive it.

gadadhara mitra-vara, sri svarupa damodara

sada kala gaura-krsna yahe

jagatera dekhi’klesa, dhariya bhiksuka-vesa

aharahah krsna-nama bhaje

sri gaura icchaya dui, mahima ki kava mui

aprakrta parisada-katha

prakasa haiya seve, krsna-gaurabhinna-deve

aprakasya katha yatha tatha

He says, “It is very difficult to perceive the sweet will of Sri Gauranga but, if we can lift ourselves up to that level, we see that Svarupa Damodara Goswami and Sri Gadadhar Pandit are always engaged in their service here in *Nabadwip*.

Sometimes it is suppressed and sometimes it is appearing on the surface. In that plane, all is going on by the sweet will of Sri Gauranga – without any restriction.

But now I find that those two have appeared on the surface as Srila Gaura Kisor Das Babaji and Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur. I have seen it with my own eye of

divine service but this is not to be advertised – not to be given publicly anywhere and everywhere. People will laugh at it. But this is my heartfelt conclusion.” He has written this in his poem concluding his commentary on *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta*.

Sri Garadhar Pandit was identified with Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur. That was the vision of our *Gurudeva*, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. He could see in them the same identity. He considered *siksa-guru-parampara* to be the most substantial thing.

“Eliminating the *sahajiya-vada* which gives much importance to the outer cover, try to look within and see things more deeply. Try to understand the deeper vibrations of the outside environment and see within yourself as well. Dive deep and you will find the plane of the finest vibrations which will carry that news to you and you shall see the Truth.”

Chapter 18 Conclusion

Corridors of The Load-Stone

Please listen attentively to what I shall explain. In a scientific way I shall try to explain the subject to you in general – independent of all religious conceptions.

First of all we are to understand that there are three planes of life:

1. The plane of mundane enjoyment
2. The plane of renunciation
3. The plane of dedication.

The plane of enjoyment is where we are presently, more or less. Mundane enjoyment means exploitation; and without exploitation, none can exist in this plane. Everything is full of life: creepers, grass, and trees also have life, but without exploitation and killing other forms of life, none can maintain their body here.

The material world is the plane of exploitation and, as Newton’s third law

says, “to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.” By exploitation one takes a loan; to clear that loan one will have to go down. In this way there are so many souls going up and down, up and down due to action and reaction in the plane of exploitation. Society is trying to exploit to the utmost; everywhere there is the attempt to live at the cost of others. Without it, life is impossible in this arena because this is the plane of exploitation.

The Buddhists and so many others are trying to get out of this entanglement of exploitation and find a life where there is no exploitation, no action and reaction.

To avoid action and reaction they try to find a position of renunciation, and they come to a conception similar to dreamless sleep, that of a *samadhi* or *nirvana*: to withdraw completely from the objective world and to remain in the subjective plane. Without allowing their feelings to move into the lower plane, they always keep a subjective position, and that is something like dreamless sleep.

The theistic section, however, is of the opinion that there is another world; the world of dedication. That dedication is just the opposite of exploitation. In the mundane plane every unit wants to exploit the environment, but in the plane of dedication, every unit wants to serve the environment; and not only the environment, but the real key to the life of that plane is to serve the Centre. We are living in an organic whole, so every point must be true to the organic Centre.

There is a central point that by knowing, everything is known, by attaining which, everything is attained. The long and short of the entire advice of the sacred scriptures is to try to find out that Centre. In the beginning some may think this to be ludicrous claim: “By knowing One, everything is known! What is this? Only a madman can say such a thing!”

To clarify this point, an analogy is given in the ancient scriptures: when you pour water onto the root of a tree, the whole tree is nourished and if you put food into the stomach, the whole body is fed. Similarly, if you do service to the Centre, everything is served. It is possible but in order to accomplish this we have to enter the plane of dedication. Avoiding both the plane of exploitation and also that of renunciation, you should try to enter the plane of dedication. The *atma* – that is you, the soul proper – is a member of that plane. That is the real world whereas this material world is the perverted reflection.

You are not a Member of this Dying World

So do away with the animal consciousness that consumes you – that you are flesh and blood. You are not limited to flesh and blood! You are a conscious unit and you will not die. You are not a member of this dying world, where everything is sure to die on account of its misidentification. This is forced upon you – ‘you must die, you must become infirm, you must be born, you must suffer from disease’. But all these are the fault of misidentification of your self with your body. This is animal consciousness: consciousness that you are an animal. But you are not so. You are a conscious unit, you are spirit, you are soul!

Not only is the soul immortal, not only does God exist, not only is He the Absolute Reality and Supreme Consciousness – but we ourselves are units of that conscious world. As spiritual sparks, our souls are eternally connected with the Supreme. God is compared to the sun, and from Him innumerable souls emanate, like particles of light coming from the sun. The particles of light can never be considered the same as the sun. There is an eternal difference. But the particles of light are eternally connected with the sun and possess the same qualities in a minute degree. Like that, all souls are eternally connected with the Supreme. In quality they are similar, yet in quantity there is an eternal difference. This eternal difference makes room for a loving exchange between all souls and God. This is the happy plane of life, where everything is moving in divine harmony.

So separate yourself eternally from that mania, from that misconception and false identification with this material aspect, which is merely the result of your infatuation with illusion. Be reinstated in your glorious position as soul. And how is this possible? You are marginal by constitution, so you cannot stand on your own two feet. You must have some shelter – either mundane within your mundane identification, or above that, you must have some shelter above your head.

According to the result of our *karma* – our previous deeds – we shall be placed in a particular environment. There, the soul takes on a particular bodily form suitable to our *karma*. We must start our spiritual life from wherever we are placed; we must begin our work of conquering all those *samskaras* (mundane tendencies) that comprise the mental and physical encasement we are living in.

Tat te ‘nukampam susamiksamano

Nobody but ourselves is responsible for the situations we are placed in.

Sometimes it may seem that injustice is being done to us, but really, all that comes to us as a result of our past deeds. We do not always recollect these past deeds however, because it is our nature to forget. When we realize that all that happens to us is due to our own previous actions, we come to the corridor of true liberation.

That is why we should not only live in our present position without complaint, but moreover, we shall have to consider it as really necessary to be spiritually upwardly mobile. In this way, we have to accept whatever adversities come to us as the grace of the Lord. We must cope with this positive angle of vision of goodness: “This is my real necessity. There is no error in the calculation of the Lord. This test has been extended to me for my benefit. To stand, to face and cross this opposition is my chance to have progress in my life. This test has been given by the Lord to facilitate my progressive life.” In the scriptures we are advised to face all circumstances in such an optimistic way. Then very easily and swiftly we shall cross these walls of misunderstanding, this *maya* or illusion, and we shall be liberated, and even more, we shall have participation in God consciousness – the life of dedication.

The Absolute Truth is for Himself

The real world is where every unit is dedicating itself to the whole, represented by the Centre, just as in a healthy body every atom will work for the welfare of the whole body. If an atom works for itself, it exploits to the extreme and such local works for local interest are clearly detrimental. Every part of the body, and every atom is to work for the welfare of the whole system. There is a Centre and by the guidance of that Centre, it will work.

What is the position of the Centre? That Absolute Truth, the Prime Cause of everything, must have two qualifications. What are they? It must be by itself and for itself. Please try to pay attention. By itself means that He is His own cause –

nothing else created Him. If anything has created Him, that creator will have the primary importance. Therefore, to be the Absolute He must be eternally existing and not created by anything. The Absolute must have this qualification. The next qualification is that the Absolute Truth is for itself. He exists for His own satisfaction, not to satisfy any other. If His existence is to satisfy another entity, then He will be secondary, and they for whose satisfaction He is living will have the prime position.

Therefore, the Absolute must have these two qualifications: He is His own cause, and He exists only to satisfy Himself, to fulfil His own purpose.

The Absolute is by Himself and for Himself. If any straw moves, it moves to fulfill the purpose of the Absolute. Everything – every incident, and whatever happens – must have to be for His satisfaction. So the real current is His play, His pastimes. Yet we find ourselves guided by separate interest: family interest or country interest or humanitarianism. There is always a clash between innumerable separate interests and so there is trouble. But we must leave all our so-called special interests, come out from misunderstanding, and try to attain the function of a unit that is active for the case of the whole. We are to remember to be faithful to the Centre. At present all our respective duties are for local interest, but we should give up the local identification of our own interest and merge totally in the interest of the organic whole.

We see that if a military officer takes even three dollars for his own purpose, he is punished. However, if he kills so many for the interest of the country, he is rewarded. Similarly, whatever is done for the satisfaction of the whole is good, but if you do anything for yourself or any local friend, you will be punished in the form of a negative reaction that will come to you some way or other.

Neither exploitation nor renunciation will do. Both exploitation and renunciation are abnormal. The happy life is the life of dedication. In an organic whole the common interest is that everyone must be dedicated to the Centre, and to the Centre means to the whole, and that is proper dedication for the whole.

We are not to put food into the eye, or into the nose, or the ear, or anywhere except the stomach. Then only will it be distributed properly and the whole organism will be healthy. All of us are parts of the whole universe, and our duty is to work for the whole, and that is devotion, dedication, surrender. And how are we to know about that? We will receive help from the revealed scriptures, and from the many saints and agents who are also coming from that plane to bring us into harmony.

Religion of the Highest Harmony

The highest harmony in religion has been given by the great 15th century Indian saint, Sri Chaitanya. He explained devotion on the basis of the *Bhagavad-gita* and the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* – the Indian scriptures understood to be the

conclusion of all revealed scriptures. In this way, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu explained that energy or power is not the highest thing, but knowledge is above it. Knowledge can control power and give a beneficial result. But further, knowledge itself also holds a lower position: above it is love and affection, and that is the highest. Neither knowledge nor power, but only affection can give us fulfillment of life.

Mercy is higher than justice. Justice only exists where there is the necessity of laws and rules, but in the realm of the Absolute Autocrat, who is the Absolute Good, there can be no question of any apprehension about Him. He is Absolute Good, and Absolute Good means Absolute Love and Affection, and that is home.

Back to God, back to home.

What is home? It is where we find that we are in the midst of our “well-wishers”. If we do not care for our own benefit, there are so many who will take care of us – the whole environment will take care of us, and that is home – the domain of the Absolute. We can enter into His service, the highest position, and thereby see the affection, love, harmony, and beauty that exist there. All these dualities are similar. They constitute the nature of the Prime Cause and Good, and we are to go there. Misusing free will we have somehow been led astray but now we are being called, “Come home, back to God and back to home, the highest position, the land of love.”

This is, in general and in short, the sum total that I have presented to you – this is the conception of God-consciousness given in *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and it is the conception that has been given by Sri Chaitanya. Go to the Centre, use your life for total dedication to the Centre, and the Centre is all above justice. It is ‘all-merciful’, affectionate, loving, and beautiful. The *Bhagavad-gita* gives a brief overview of all conceptions of religion. That is, exploitation, renunciation, and dedication are the three planes of life, and the soul proper is a member of the land of dedication.

All souls are dedicating units, but somehow, by misusing their partial free will, they have entered into the world of exploitation. Buddha and others want to withdraw from here, to get out of the entanglement of exploitation of action and reaction – by complete retirement. They have said that after retirement, the soul can live happily. Still, there may be the possibility of again becoming entangled

in this trap. But where the free souls really live, in that place all of them are dedicating units. When we want to trace what it is that is harmonizing them and maintaining them in that plane, we shall see that all are working for the whole.

And that Whole is represented by the One Absolute Good.

But to understand this, you will have to dive deep, not into the plane of body and mind, but into the plane of soul. You will have to dive deep into the reality that is within us. It is not a foreign thing to be acquired by loan, but the soul is within everyone, even the insects and the trees. So, we have to rise to the plane of soul.

Eliminate both your physical and mental encasements and find out your own self. There you will find the key – the clue to the proper world where life is worth living.

If we want to live in that higher domain, we shall have to serve. By ‘serving and sacrifice’ we go up, and by ‘an enjoying spirit’ we go down. We are to understand what is exploitation and enjoyment, and what is higher service.

Divine service is pure, and in that service there is also a pure type of ecstasy. By giving, we become gainers. By exploiting, we become losers. We are to see all these things and for this vision, the human birth is very valuable. In connection with the *sadhus*, the saints, the agents of divinity – we shall try our best to get out of this entanglement and enter into the land of love, dedication, and affection where every word is a song, every step is a dance, and the flute is the dear-most companion.

Every word is a song, but this is not a sound of this plane. This is from some other world, a world that is so soft, so sweet, so heart-capturing. It is a world where correct behaviour occurs most sweetly and harmoniously. Every word is like a song. Every movement is sweet, like dancing. It has been described in this way. Everything is replete with the highest degree of beauty. This is the land of beauty – there everything is beautiful. Everything has a touch of divine beauty.

The Prime Cause is charming, attracting, and arresting heart and soul.

Yes! There is a land of such existence. The Sweet Absolute is there – the Lord of Love is there. Everything there is for His pleasure. But in which way can we attain the divine life? We are to differentiate between the mundane and the divine. We have to examine them in order to accept the divine life.

We also have to understand that God is not an order supplier. If I am sick, I am not to ask, “Oh God, cure my sickness.” And if I am poor, I should not only pray, “Oh God, give me money!” Such mercenary connection is not very happy, although it still has some benefit because at least there is recognition of a supernatural power who can do wonders. However, it is better to want God without expecting anything mundane from Him. We must want God – Who is the source of all creation – and we should not want anything else which we may consider valuable in this mundane realm.

We are to depend on Him: “Oh Lord, give me what is good. I am an imperfect being. I do not know what is good and what is bad. Please provide whatever You consider to be good for me.” This is an improvement over praying to Him for mundane benefits.

But better than this is to accept the creed of unalloyed service to the highest: “I want You, my Lord, and nothing else.” And what will be our connection with Him? Service – “I want only Your divine service.”

At the beginning we might think we are being losers, but ultimately we shall gain. Apparently we are giving ourselves, we are sacrificing our selfish interests, but in the subtle senses we gain thereby. This ontological truth should be appreciated. It is neither a dogma, nor blind faith. It is based on higher unprejudiced reason.

Our aspiration should be for such a life. We can sincerely foster the idea to feel attraction to a life of such a plane where everything is of a musical character.

This is the land of *Vrndavan*. This is the land where God is eternally engaged in a sweet play of love with all surrendered souls. *Vrndavan* is so friendly, so sweet, so near to us, and such a “well-wisher” of ours. We are quite at home there – sweet, sweet home. In our innate and innermost existence we are members of that plane. Now we have come out, and we have scattered our consciousness all over the surface. Cover, cover, cover – there are so many layers but they are all dry things. And the substance is within. Eliminating this bodily cover, the mental cover, the egoistic cover – I may enter into the land of *Vrndavan* – the land of love. *Vrndavan* resides within me, and there I can find my friends everywhere. They are my friends and relatives, and they will give me an all-too-pleasing experience – ecstasy.

Sri Chaitanya came with this news for us. “Oh, you are a child of that soil; why do you suffer here, my children, my boys? Why do you suffer? You are a child of that soil, and you are suffering so much, coming in the desert? Your home is so resourceful, so sweet and you are running in the desert? What is this? Come!

Leave this poisonous charm, this suicidal charm.

“This so-called charm, *maya*-charm, misunderstanding charm – this is suicidal.

Leave this apparent charm! This is poisonous – like a witch. The witch has charmed you here and made you spellbound. Come along with Me! I shall take you to your home which is so very sweet!”

This should be the course of our life, our cherished goal. *Srimad Bhagavatam* tells us this. Home, sweet, sweet home. You are a child of that soil. In one word, that is the goal. Why is that the highest goal? That is your home! This one word, ‘home’, should be sufficient to attract you.

You are wandering here in a foreign land, but there is your home. You will get home comfort there, and you will not be able to deny that. So, back to God, back to home, back to Godhead.

End